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EDITORIAL

VIEW FROM THE NIMITZ

It was a beautiful day, the sky blue, the sea whitecapped, the flags snapping in the breeze as the nuclear carrier *Nimitz* neared home port after the longest U.S. Navy tour at sea since 1945. And it was Memorial Day when the Commander in Chief stepped onto the deck from his helicopter to welcome the ship's crew back from the Indian Ocean. So what did the President do with the occasion?

Carter did two absolutely characteristic things: he radically reversed himself on a matter of domestic policy, and he made seriously misleading statements on a matter of foreign policy. All this in a couple of breaths. It was breathtaking.

The reversal was on military pay and benefits. Only a few weeks ago he turned down a request by the Joint Chiefs for substantial raises with the statement that the satisfactions of patriotic service were a good substitute for cash. On the deck of the *Nimitz* all that disappeared when he announced his support of an appropriation that will cost $700 million in the next fiscal year.

But it was the political-strategic statement that was the shocker. Carter stood there and told the crew (and the world) that their long tour of duty in the Indian Ocean "has been the major factor in protecting the lives of the fifty-three hostages that are still being held." It was, of course, from this same deck that the helicopters took off on the "rescue" mission that would have been a disaster if it had not turned into a fiasco (bringing to mind I. F. Stone's succinct verdict: "It was a good argument for early abortion"). And he compared the benign *Nimitz* mission with the Soviet troops "at war with Moslem schoolgirls" in Afghanistan.

Don't change horses in mid-ocean, was the real Presidential message on the *Nimitz*. "Man the lifeboats" would be a better signal.

CASTRO IN TROUBLE?
Peter Winn

THE WIRING OF NEW HAVEN
Andrew Houlding

SARTRE
Marcus G. Raskin

LABOR UNREST IN THE P. O.
Charles Bagli

HERMAPHRODITE STORY
Edmund White

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE
Lucy R. Lippard

UTOPIAS
Emile Capouya

THE CUBAN EXILES

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

DAGMARIS CABEZAS

As the American public watches, tens of thousands of Cuban immigrants arrive in Key West, Florida, worn and distraught after braving high winds and stormy seas in hundreds of small vessels. Yet another drama, almost as violent, is being played out, unnoticed by most Americans, by the more than 700,000 Cubans exiled in the United States. It is a controversy that involves a reassessment by the exiles of their once unwavering opposition to the Cuban Government. And it shows that many are favoring a rapprochement with Cuba and that some are even openly supporting the Cuban revolution.

The most dramatic change in the longstanding anti-Castro stance of most Cuban exiles became apparent a year and a half ago when Cuban President Fidel Castro held an unprecedented meeting with Cuban exile leaders in Havana. During the "dialogue," as the November 1978 meeting was called, Castro announced that Cuba would release 3,600 political prisoners (which was subsequently done). And the Cuban Government also pledged to reunite divided families and agreed to allow routine visits to Cuba by the exiles.

The Havana meeting set off a powder keg in the Cuban community. Friendships were broken, families split, tempers flared and violence erupted over the pros and cons of establishing a "dialogue" with Castro. The controversy centered on the implications of the dialogue since acceptance of these agreements implied acceptance of the permanency of the Cuban revolution by the exiles. To diehard anti-Castroites, the renewed contact with Cuba meant giving up the dream, however distant, of someday returning to a nonsocialist Cuba. To dialogue supporters,

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LETTERS.

NEW McCARTHYISM

New York City

One need not have agreed with McGeorge Bundy's Vietnam policies to be disturbed by the tone that pervades Richard J. Walton's article attacking Bundy's appointment to a faculty position at New York University ["The Laundering of McGeorge Bundy," *The Nation*, April 12]. Although the piece never quite comes to grips with the issue, the author seems to believe that foreign policy officers during the Vietnam War should be forever excluded from academic positions. Walton thus joins the growing chorus of liberal and left commentators demanding a test of ideological purity for the recipients of university posts.

Walton may recognize how reminiscent all this is of attempts during the witch-hunting 1950s to bar alleged Communists from campuses. He ends his piece by finding Bundy not just someone with whom he disagrees but (in words borrowed from an opponent of Bundy at N.Y.U.) not academically qualified. If Bundy, who was a professor of government and dean of faculty at Harvard for ten years and National Security Adviser for another six, is not qualified to be a research professor on nuclear policy, one is hard pressed to imagine what qualifications Walton has in mind.

Whatever Walton's obfuscations, the threat to academic freedom from this new McCarthyism is clear.

Peter G. Samuels

WALTON REPLIES

New York City

May I suggest that my loathing for McCarthyism is no less than Peter Samuels's and that *The Nation* needs no defense on that score from me or anyone else. It was attacking McCarthyism when few others dared to.

McGeorge Bundy was not a mere foreign policy officer just doing his job during the Vietnam War. He was a prominent architect of that war and, thus, in the eyes of many, including me, nothing less than a war criminal. Would Samuels have recommended the hiring of war criminals after World War II?

Furthermore, Bundy is not a defenseless civil servant. He has been in the very bosom of the establishment his entire life. He went, remember, from the White House to the presidency of the Ford Foundation and now to another subsidized job, as a research professor of history at New York University at a salary neither he nor the university would disclose. Bundy's pain therefore has been less than that of the 50,000 Americans and countless Indochinese who died in the unspeakable war he had a major role in planning and prosecuting. Contrast him, say, to a Vietnam War veteran in a wheelchair.

I do not question his academic qualifications, although others do, nor do I believe ideological purity is a requisite for an academic job, but I do believe a man should be judged by his actions. That is why I feel nothing but revulsion for the honors and material rewards heaped on Bundy, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger and others.

There is considerable difference between openly attacking the powerful for their deeds and the malicious, sneaky terrorism directed against those serving their nation honorably who had little or no defense against Joe McCarthy and his confederates. Samuels confuses David and Goliath, the honorable and the not-so-honorable.

Richard J. Walton

MEAN-SPIRITED TRAVELOGUE

Knoxville, Tenn.

I do not know Dedra Hauser or the New York Street Theater Caravan but assume they are well-intentioned folks. I do know and have visited workers, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union organizers and other community people in nearly all J. P. Stevens plant locations in the South. I have also known the Fourth and Gill neighborhood organization in Knoxville from its beginning. I do know *The Nation* and all the principals caricatured in Hauser's "Art and Agitprop" [*The Nation*, April 5]. I don't recognize anyone (including *The Nation*) in that article, reject the stereotypes, and am dismayed at Hauser's innuendoes, imperious tone and factual errors.

For instance: Since Hauser registered her disappointment last August "that there won't be any shows for Stevens workers in Knoxville," she might have found out that there are no J. P. Stevens plants within 100 miles of Knoxville, Tennessee.

In any protracted organizing struggle in this country, and especially in the South, a visitor passing through can sometimes make telling criticisms of particular tactical considerations. A.C.T.W.U.'s historic organizing in the South daily faces infinitely more complex issues and dilemmas than Hauser's selective, simplistic anecdotes suggest. It is not as if Southern workers' rights were not made negligible enough by decisions made in New York's J. P. Stevens tower—or that the benefits of collective bargaining for the South were so difficult for armchair liberals to understand, but now we must defend our work in progressive journals from superficial and mean-spirited travelogues posturing as analysis.

At one point Hauser writes, "I don't even want to think about the implications." I think she didn't—nor did *The Nation.*

James Sessions
Executive Director
Southerners for Economic Justice

HAUSER REPLIES

New York City

Contrary to James Sessions's presumption, I spent several months thinking about this article, talking to activists and researching the history of Southern textile organizing. I submitted the article in spite of misgivings about criticizing a difficult campaign whose goals I wholeheartedly support. I wrote not in a spirit of meanness but out of concern that the labor movement's own policies and practices are hastening its demise.

Many of the activists and organizers I met in the South have strong and serious criticisms of A.C.T.W.U.'s approach to organizing mill workers. And although no one wanted to speak for the record, they urged me to air some of these issues. The union's treatment of the Street Theater Caravan exemplified the organizational rigidity that has alienated many would-be supporters, both within the mill and in the community at large. More important, it demonstrates a political timidity that has played neatly into the hands of J. P. Stevens.

One of A.C.T.W.U.'s biggest handicaps in the South is its image of weakness. Southern industry is visibly unified and organized in its opposition to unions, from the Chambers of Com-

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EDITORIALS.

Not in My State

We have been watching with some amusement the efforts of the otherwise hawkish Senators from Utah and Nevada to reduce the number of MX missiles that were originally to be emplaced in the Great Basin desert. Feeling the heat from the home folks, who are up in arms about the damage MX basing will inflict on the environment, Senators Howard Cannon, Paul Laxalt and Jake Garn introduced an amendment to the 1981 Defense Department authorization bill guaranteeing that no more than 2,300 missile shelters—half the total the Air Force originally called for—will be put in their states.

The governors of Utah and Nevada, Scott Matheson and Robert List, had already expressed their opposition last March to the monstrous network of nuclear megaliths. After hearing their objections in testimony before a House subcommittee, Representative Robert McEwen, a New York Republican, lectured Matheson and List that the basic issue was "whether your citizens will take on the burden of defending America." Asked if his state was willing to provide a home for the missiles, McEwen could only say, somewhat lamely, "Unfortunately, New York does not have the geotechnical capabilities." Patriotism, it seems, stops at home.

To ascertain how many governors from the other forty-eight states would want an MX in their constituents' back yards, *The Nation* conducted a gubernatorial poll. The results showed only five governors willing to accept the MX. And what's more, none of the affirmative states would appear to have the spare 20,000 square miles of land the MX system would at a minimum require, which, come to think of it, may be the reason they said yes.

In the West and Middle West, six governors of states once considered potential sites by the Pentagon oppose the system for their states. One of these, William Clements of Texas, was Deputy Secretary of Defense in 1977 when the MX was designed for "stuffing" into Minuteman silos. Governors from Alaska, Iowa, Minnesota and Vermont were also opposed. A spokesman for Gov. Bruce Babbitt of Arizona said, "The Governor wouldn't block it. Obviously we wouldn't be sad to see it somewhere else."

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In Oklahoma, another quondam site, Gov. George Nigh said he would have to re-evaluate the system's pros and cons, a shift from just nine months ago when he thought it would benefit the state. Ed Herschler of Wyoming, once considered by Utah planners and the Cheyenne press as a most likely volunteer for the project, declined comment. Four other governors from the West and eleven from the rest of the country responded similarly, either pleading ignorance of the MX's details or reserving judgment, as did Gov. Arthur Link of North Dakota, who said, "I don't want to make up my mind until I have to."

The governors of Idaho, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia did say they would support the MX in their states, and Gov. Lee Dreyfus of Wisconsin said he had no moral position against it. None of these states can accommodate the MX: all but one of their governors cited sacrifice for national defense as their reason for support.

The exception was James Rhodes of Ohio, who said, "We would welcome it. We probably have good land for it in the hills of southwest Ohio." Never mind that the full system would take up half the state's land area; given what one Kansas official called "the Battlestar Galactica quality" of the MX, Rhodes's response is appropriately absurd.

The Western Governors' Conference in Lake Tahoe on June 9 and 10 could mark the end of Western fence-sitting on this issue. Matheson and List plan to introduce a resolution on the MX; we suggest a simple formula all might agree on: "Any state but mine."

Reporting for this editorial was conducted by JoAnn Wypijewski, a Nation *intern; thirty-three governors responded.*

The Undesirables

The recent decision to deny internationally acclaimed Italian playwright Dario Fo a visa to the United States is an act directly contradictory to Basket Three of the Helsinki Accords, which guarantees a free flow of ideas and artists across national boundaries. Worse, Fo's case—and that of his dramatist wife, Franca Rame, who was also denied entrance—is not an exception but merely an all-too-typical example of the hypocritical actions of a Government that routinely advertises its support of free expression.

Despite the huge popular and critical success of his play *Mistero Buffo* in Italy, France, Germany, Canada, China, Poland and a dozen other nations, Fo is not well known in this country. The U.S. State Department intends to keep him that way. The reason: Fo violates a regulation that denies entry to aliens who belong to groups supporting the violent overthrow or resistance to the American Government or "any organized government." Though long an outspoken opponent of terrorism, Fo nonetheless believes even accused terrorists should have lawyers. To further this belief, he belongs to Soccorso Rosso (Red Aid), a left-wing group that provides legal counsel to leftist detainees and campaigns for better prison conditions for political prisoners. In short, Fo can't come to America because he believes even leftists should have the right to counsel that the Supreme Court's *Miranda* decision gives the accused in America. This is regarded as supporting the violent overthrow of government, at least by our State Department.

"Fo's record of performance with regard to the United States and our own interests is not good," explains a member of the State Department's Italian desk. "He has never had a good word to say about us. I don't think Western Europe is going to be up in arms because this great humanitarian was denied a visa." The clear implication of these statements is that entrance to the United States is granted on two bases: (*1*) having politically acceptable—read, right-wing—views, (*2*) being important enough that being shut out would produce significant protest.

That the Fo case is not an isolated incident can be seen in dozens of examples stretching back into the 1950s, when even right-wing writer Jorge Luis Borges was denied a visa on the mistaken belief that all Latin Americans had to be leftists. A more current case is that of Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who was not allowed in the United States until his international best seller *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which won a National Book Award in the translation category, was quoted by Henry Kissinger in a speech. Since the speech was in Mexico City, where Garcia Marquez lives, the erstwhile Secretary of State was immediately reminded that the author could not enter the Secretary's country. Embarrassed, Kissinger pushed the visa through the bureaucracy, which found it could accept Garcia Marquez on the ground he was going to deliver a totally invented "lecture at Columbia University."

"That is now the formula," the writer told *The New York Times*. "Every time I go to the United States, the fiction is that it is 'for lectures at Columbia University.' "

Many other cases, however, have not had such a happy—if ridiculous—ending. The late Lelio Basso, an independent Italian leftist, was not allowed to meet publicly with Harvard University's Center for European Studies, which had invited him there. At the same time that the distinguished Resistance fighter was forced to meet students behind closed doors, Giorgio Almirante, Italy's most rabid neofascist, was being publicly toasted by Thomas (Tip) O'Neill. Socialist Regis Debray, a Frenchman active in Latin American struggles against dictators, was never allowed into this country—even while his wife was studying here.

These are only a few incidents involving relatively well-known people. Others forbidden entry into the United States include homosexuals, unwed mothers and people with any history of depression or mental illness, even if it is cured. "Suppose an American marries a Frenchwoman who once had a breakdown," says a European Economic Community diplomat. "He better get used to living in France if he wants to stay with her."

Ironically, the passage of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act has done little to clear up the United States' hypocritical visa policies. Enacted in 1977, Section 105 of the act was intended to bring American visa policy in

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line with the recently signed Helsinki Accords by providing a review mechanism for aliens subscribing to prohibited ideologies. Though card-carrying Commies can now get in without too much difficulty, independent leftists have a great deal of trouble crossing the border. People like Oriana Fallaci, Lina Wertmuller and Sergio Segre are acceptable because they cannot be kept out without triggering protest, but evidently the department thinks the likes of Fo are unimportant enough to close the door. When not subjected to public scrutiny, bureaucracies and governments tend to do what they would like to do, and the clear evidence is that the U.S. Department of State remains committed to blocking certain ideas from the country.

This policy not only violates the Helsinki Accords but is a disastrous factor in America's growing isolation from the currents of world thought. Only if artists like Fo can come here can we see what the rest of the world is thinking—something that is necessary to stop the growing government- and media-fostered sentiment of public xenophobia.

Exeunt Omnes?

Most Americans have little notion of the workings of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Yet that agency is proposing to enact a minor change in the regulations governing foreign students residing in this country, which—if enacted as proposed—could result in mass expulsions of Iranian students, with ramifications going beyond the hostage crisis.

The proposed change in regulations seems innocuous enough: all foreign students currently allowed to remain in the United States "during status" as students—that is, until their studies are complete—will have that designation canceled, and will have to reapply for a yearly residence permit. But immigration lawyers and knowledgeable Government officials know that this seemingly minor change in immigration regulations is the device by which all Iranian students in the United States—some 70,000 individuals—may be threatened with deportation over the coming summer.

The mechanism of the deportation under consideration is as follows: Iranian student residence permits will be canceled along with those of all other foreign students (to avoid charges of discrimination). Then, I.N.S. officials, acting under an executive order banning the renewal of Iranian visas, will deny Iranian students the right to renew. They will be declared deportable and given two weeks to leave the country. In fact, the appeal process is so backlogged that it could be years before expulsions occurred.

Moreover, there is a real question as to whether the deportation of such a large group can actually be accomplished if there is any concerted resistance. The U.S. Government could not even locate the hundred or so Iranian diplomatic personnel who chose to stay in the United States once they had been officially expelled. What will happen if tens of thousands of Iranians choose to go underground? If deportation notices are given, and then cannot be enforced, the immigration service and the U.S. Government will once again look ineffectual in the eyes of the world.

The net result of such a move, if implemented, is likely to be not pressure on Iran but further propaganda for Ayatollah Khomeini. In the wake of the execution of the former Education Minister, Farokhrou Parsa, who was accused among other things of corrupting youth through promoting Western education, the Government will doubtless welcome the expulsion of students from the United States as a fortunate escape from the "Great Satan."

Michael Metrinko, one of the fifty-three American hostages, observed when he was serving as consul in the city of Tabriz that there was not a single family in that city of 600,000 that did not have a relative studying in the United States. Metrinko believed that families with ties to students in the United States are likely to support measures that will foster good relations. The presence of these students thus provides a measure of self-interest for Iran in settling its differences with the United States. Clearly, if the students are deported, one of the last few points of leverage for negotiation will be lost, along with the last potential store of Iranian good will toward the United States. The students returning to Iran are the future leaders of that country. Expelling them under these circumstances would make them desperate and embittered. Their anger would poison our relations with Iran for years to come.

It must be emphasized that the proposed changes in I.N.S. regulations have not yet gone into effect. They cannot be enacted without Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti's express approval. Aides to Civiletti indicate that the Justice Department is quite aware that these changes are being proposed in order to deport Iranian students as expeditiously as possible, but say that no immediate action to put these changes into force is contemplated. This suggests that the executive branch is preparing them as another diplomatic volley to be fired against Iran at a strategically opportune moment—say, if the Iranian parliament fails to vote to release the hostages.

This act of the Justice Department at the probable instigation of the Oval Office is likely to provide one of Edmund Muskie's first tests as Secretary of State. State Department officials have expressed grave doubts about its wisdom. Their concern is so great that they are considering serving as amicus curiae on behalf of the students before Civiletti. They are wise to take this stand. Just as success has been achieved in downplaying the hostage issue both here and in Iran with positive benefits for both sides, a new crisis could cause the entire situation to blow sky-high once again, and this must give Muskie pause. And another question obtrudes. Having already implied his disapproval of a foreign policy determined by the National Security Adviser, can Secretary Muskie afford to let policy now be made by the Attorney General in this backhanded way?

WILLIAM O. BEEMAN

William O. Beeman, an anthropologist at Brown University, spent seven of the past twelve years studying in Iran and is the author of a forthcoming book on that country. He is a contributing editor of the Pacific News Service.

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VARIATIONS

CALVIN TRILLIN

Now that Ronald Reagan seems to have the nomination all locked up, what am I supposed to do with a leftover theory that explains why he was losing? It happens to be a perfectly good theory—a brilliant theory, really—and discarding it simply because Reagan is the only candidate left in the race seems a terrible waste in this era when we Americans are beginning to become aware of the limitations of our resources. I heard it just after the results of the Iowa caucus voting came in—around the time the political specialist NBC has analyzing these matters informed us viewers that the Reagan candidacy could virtually be written off. Reagan was losing, I was told, because of cable television: In the four years since his last attempt at the nomination, thousands of sets had been plugged into the cable system, and the reception on cable is so good that a significant proportion of the Iowa electorate was able to see exactly how old he looked.

I loved that theory. It had the simplicity of all the truly appealing political theories: Muskie lost in 1972 because he cried, Nixon lost in 1960 because his makeup ran, Ford lost in 1976 because he kept bumping his head, Humphrey lost in 1968 because the Chicago police kept bumping other people's heads. In comparison, the only other interesting explanation of Reagan's problems I heard just after the Iowa caucuses seemed hopelessly cluttered: Someone told me Reagan was defeated in Iowa because he had changed his name.

"You mean his name used to be Ronald Rabinowitz?" I said, realizing that studio heads used to force actors to shed awkward monikers.

"Of course not."

"Ronald Rigatoni? Ronald Thistlethwaite?"

"No, no."

"Ronald McDonald?"

"Don't be silly."

"Ronald Duck?"

It was explained to me that some years ago—after rather than before Reagan became an actor—he had changed the pronunciation of his name from Ree-gun to Ray-gun. According to my informant's sources, the change came with his marriage to Nancy Reagan, who, being a debutante from Chicago, did not want to sound like the wife of an Irish policeman. Chicago debutantes are particularly sensitive on that score, I was told, since most of their grandfathers were Irish policemen. The theory held that the voters of Iowa, sensing some dissonance in the presentation of Ronald Ree-gun the movie actor as Ronald Ray-gun the political candidate, rejected him for putting on airs.

I find that theory much too complicated—the way Reagan finds foreign policy. The cable television theory, on the other hand, conjures up a nice, clearly focused picture of a couple of Grant Wood farm folk up around Anamosa, which happens to be Grant Wood's hometown, settling down in front of the television to decide which candidate they're going to back at the local Republican caucus over at Center Junction, down around Onslow. The caucus is always held in conjunction with a covered-dish supper, and the folks up around Anamosa also have to face the decision of whether to bring a meatloaf or the chopped-carrot Jello mold that Walter Cronkite liked so much at the 1976 caucus.

In 1976, according to the theory, they still didn't have cable; their television reception consisted of a blurred version of the station over at Davenport, unless the wind was blowing the wrong way. They were making do with their old sixteen-inch (diagonal) black-and-white. Who needs snow in color? They were Reagan supporters. They cheered when his political commercials came on. In blurry black-and-white, Reagan still looked like The Gipper.

Then cable came. All over the country, enterprising American companies started competing to win the franchise from local authorities to bring the folks at home bright, clear pictures and a dash or two of soft porn. So much new money was changing hands that the old competitors for the attention of the City Council—real estate developers and bridge builders and insurance agents—could not get their phone calls returned from people they had been bribing for years. Sooner or later, the cable got up around Anamosa.

Pa has finished seeing to the animals, and he's settled into his favorite armchair in front of the television—a twenty-four-inch true-tone, maxi-vision color set encased in a console the size of a Dodge pickup. He is looking forward to a peaceful evening watching Robert Dole and Phil Crane and the other fellas discuss the state of the SALT II negotiations. Ma is still in the kitchen, taking another swipe at the countertop with her ever-present sponge, and wondering whether she could get away with a double measure of bread crumbs if they decide on meatloaf for the covered-dish supper over at Center Junction.

"Ma!" Pa shouts. "Get on out here! Take a look at Ron!"

Ma bustles into the living room, wiping her hands dry on her apron. They both stare at the television set. "Land sakes alive," Ma says.

"Over by his chin there," Pa says, pointing toward the set. "It looks like the erosion over near the creek in the South Forty."

"Are those there his ears?" Ma says. "Pa, see if you can fiddle with that set just a little so's maybe his hair won't be quite that orange." The Gipper did not have orange hair.

Pa, who has always been a whiz at machinery, adjusts knobs on the television set's massive dashboard, but the candidate's hair remains orange.

"Oh my, Pa," Ma says. "Around the neck there—it looks like the chopped-carrot Jello mold."

"That does it, Ma," Pa says. "I've made up my mind. We'll take the meatloaf."

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ARTICLES.

Home

(Continued From Front Cover)

however, the Havana agreements assured the continuity of their cultural experience, for it provided a bridge to their Cuban origins and the new revolutionary Cuban culture.

The feelings of those intellectuals, professionals and religious leaders who support the dialogue were summarized by Max Azicri, a Cuban exile professor who participated in the Havana meeting. In a special dialogue issue of *Areito*, a Cuban exile magazine which favors a rapprochement with Cuba, he noted: "There are only two possible alternatives: either we unite and take advantage of this opportunity for communication and contact; or we accept that we are a nation forever divided, shattered into pieces that will never come together again."

But for the bulk of the Cuban exile community, the most outstanding achievement of the dialogue was that it provided them with the opportunity to visit their homeland. "It was as if the doors to a very dark room had been suddenly thrown open," said Luis Rios, a Cuban blue-collar worker who asked that his real name not be used. For him, like the more than 100,000 exiles who have already traveled to Cuba since early 1979, the new Cuban policy meant a chance to re-establish contact with family and friends, whom in many cases they had not seen for more than twenty years. It is the principal reason why many who vowed never to return to Cuba until it was "free" swamped travel agencies in Miami, Washington and New York specifically created to accommodate the eager visitors. And it is why many Cuban exiles have dared to stand up against threats of physical violence, including possible assassinations, by Cuban exile terrorists.

Dagmaris Cabezas, a freelance journalist, recently graduated from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

The story of a group of Cubans in a Catholic parish in Union City is a case in point. Rios lives in this city of 70,000, a majority of whom are Cubans, located at the New Jersey end of the Holland Tunnel into Manhattan. Soon after the Havana meeting, a group of parishioners from the Holy Family Catholic Church including Rios inaugurated a project devoted to securing the release of imprisoned relatives in Cuba. But their activities did not sit well with some of the more vocal and militant anti-Castro exiles in the city, which is the center of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, an anti-Castro group linked with terrorist activity; the Holy Family parishioners were seen to be supporting the dialogue. Day and night, anonymous callers telephoned the parish threatening to put a stop to the project and to blow up the Catholic school. There were also repeated death threats against the Rev. Andres Reyes, a parish priest who participated in the Havana meeting and headed up the project.

Last June, the threats gave way to fear, and Father Reyes was quietly transferred to a predominantly Puerto Rican parish in nearby Newark. Soon after that, Rios and the other Cuban exiles were publicly accused of being "Communists" by members of a neighborhood family. This kind of name-calling had been common at Holy Family Church; on several occasions irate anti-Castroites, shouting out such charges, had interrupted Father Reyes while he was celebrating mass.

"That was the last straw and we decided to stand up to them this time," explained Rios. After all, he noted, in the battleground mentality of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, anyone labeled a "Communist" is an enemy, subject to violent reprisals. So the group decided to take the problem to Union City's municipal court. At 8 P.M. on June 11, they appeared before Judge Richard Simeone to state their grievances. During the show-cause hearing, however, the group was dissuaded from going to trial and the issue was temporarily defused. Judge Simeone, nevertheless, warned

DRAWINGS BY JEAN-CLAUDE SUARÈS

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the neighborhood families that they would face stiff penalties if they persisted in their name-calling, and the Holy Family group felt that they had made their point.

The action taken by the Holy Family parishioners, however, was unique. Few Cuban exiles have dared to challenge the anti-Castro extremists, particularly on their own turf. And those who have were not as fortunate as the Holy Family group. The first victim of the dialogue was 26-year-old Carlos Muñiz Varela, who headed a travel agency in Puerto Rico that organizes tours to Cuba. On April 28, 1979, when the young man was less than a block away from his mother's house, he was gunned down in his car. The Cuban-exile terrorist group Cero took the credit for the assassination. The second victim was Eulalio José Negrín, who had participated in the Havana meeting. Last November, as he was about to step into his car parked on a street in Union City, he was shot several times by two men wearing ski masks. The Cuban-exile terrorist group Omega 7 claimed responsibility for the murder.

In spite of assassinations, threats, debates about the wisdom of the dialogue, and the implications of the current exodus, Cubans in the United States are still returning to visit their homeland. And up until about a month ago, they were doing so on the average of 10,000 a month. These visits are seen by both sides in the dialogue issue as having an important effect on the political views of Cubans in the United States. But the nature of that effect is a matter for dispute. Staunch anti-Castroites believe that the trips will serve to reinforce the negative view of the revolution held by most exiles, while supporters of the dialogue believe the visits will help give a more balanced picture of what is going on in Cuba.

"I think that whoever visits Cuba is going to have to recognize that there have been some positive changes," noted the Rev. Dr. Cecilio Arrastía, a Presbyterian minister who left Cuba "disillusioned by the revolution." He added: "You can't hide the truth. There have been advances in education and medicine that were not there before the revolution. And you don't see the same type of poverty that exists in other Latin American countries." Dr. Arrastía, a no-nonsense man in his early 50s, participated in the dialogue with Castro in 1978. It was his first trip back since he left with his family for the United States eighteen years ago.

Interviews with exiles who have visited Cuba show that reactions are varied, confused, emotional, and can be used to support the contentions of both the supporters and opponents of the dialogue. Even in the case of two individuals from the same town, the impressions can be quite different. Moderate Cuban exiles point out that the exiles' socioeconomic level at the time of departure from Cuba and their experiences in the United States play leading roles in the way they perceive changes on the island. José Prince, a Cuban exile sociologist who teaches at City University of New York, finds that as a result of their experience as members of a minority group in the United States, Cuban exiles have begun to move away from their position as a reactionary force within U.S. politics opposed to all contact with socialist Cuba, and are now more willing to reassess their political positions on Cuba. As Professor Prince noted at a conference on Cuba held in New York City late last year: "Cubans in the United States have experienced racial discrimination. They've seen how blacks are treated, the Vietnam War, how difficult it is to survive in a society which is based on competition, and they have learned that in order to succeed one must pay the price. All those changes have affected the Cuban community here." He pointed out that another important factor in the exiles' attitudes toward Cuba is growing distaste for the reactionaries in the Cuban exile community.

The experience of Dolores Prida, managing editor of *Nuestro*, an English-language magazine for Hispanics in the United States, bears out Prince's observations on the Cuban right wing. Prida came to the United States when she was 17 and now supports renewed economic relations with Cuba. When she became editor of the now-defunct Spanish-language newspaper *El Tiempo*, she had several unpleasant experiences with Cuban reactionaries. "Once in *El Tiempo* I published a sympathetic editorial on ex-Chilean President Salvador Allende, and I was promptly branded too far to the left," she recalled. Immediately, advertising in the newspaper started to fall off. "We found out that anonymous callers were telephoning advertisers and threatening to bomb their businesses if they continued to advertise in our newspaper," Prida said.

Cuban exiles confirm that the tactic of threatening and coercing those who fail to adopt the "correct" political stance is a common practice of the extreme right. And violence is not out of the question. In 1978, a bomb exploded outside a Spanish-language daily that had allowed one of its reporters to attend the dialogue. "Where is the freedom of expression they are supposed to be fighting for?" remarked Maria Molina, a Cuban woman in her 30s who is a member of the pro-Castro Antonio Maceo Brigade. "If that's what prerevolutionary Cuba was like or post-Castro Cuba will be like, I want no part of it." Molina is one of a large number of young Cubans who attended U.S. universities during the turmoil of the late 1960s and became radicalized as a result of that experience.

In December 1977, fifty-five of them, all members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the majority in their mid-20s, were invited by the Cuban Government for a visit. During their emotionally charged three-and-a-half-week trip, the group was widely applauded in Cuba for the open support many members of the group expressed for achievements of the revolution. Their trip laid the foundation for the November 1978 meeting by showing that not all exiles were *gusanos* (worms) as they had been characterized for eighteen years. Last summer, the brigade returned to Cuba, bringing with them 200 young Cubans from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain and Venezuela (countries where the brigade has chapters). This summer, another group of young Cuban exiles will be going to Cuba under the brigade's auspices for the first time.

But the Antonio Maceo Brigade speaks for a small mi-

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nority of the Cuban exile community and their thinking is on the far left of the Cuban exile political spectrum. For the majority of Cuban exiles, going to Cuba is still a long way from open support for the revolution. "Cuban exiles have not become revolutionary all of a sudden," said Arbor Ruiz, head of Operation Reunification, a group established as a result of the dialogue. The group, based in Miami, is helping to relocate freed Cuban political prisoners who are granted visas by the United States. It also negotiates with the Cuban Government for the release of close relatives who have been separated.

Ruiz believes that despite all the problems over the dialogue, most Cuban exiles back the work of Operation Reunification. "We have no doubt that the community supports what the committee is doing and that they support the dialogue," he said. "Cuban exiles want the opportunity to visit their grandmothers in Cuba and, believe me, anybody who opposes that is going to have a very hard time."

Psychologist and scholar Lourdes Casal, who participated in the Havana meeting and is on the editorial board of *Areito*, agrees with Ruiz. She also believes that routine travel to Cuba will have a significant impact on the conservative stance of most exiles. In her study "Cubans in the United States: Their Impact on U.S.-Cuba Relations," she states: "Besides isolating and marginalizing the terrorists, the new Cuban policy is bound to have far-reaching consequences, further decreasing counterrevolutionary activities and fostering the shift of the community's median opinion toward peaceful coexistence, resumption of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. and acceptance of the Cuban regime."

In June of last year, President Jimmy Carter was presented with 10,000 signatures from Cuban-Americans who favored U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba and an end to the eighteen-year-old U.S. trade embargo. The signatures were gathered by the Cuban-American Committee for the Normalization of Relations with Cuba, founded in 1975. Its head, Manolo Gomez, said the group is made up of intellectuals, religious, civic and trade union leaders but that all have different ideological perspectives on the Cuban revolution. According to Gomez, large sectors of the Cuban exile community have supported diplomatic relations for some time, but they were fearful of expressing their positions because of possible reprisals from the terrorists. "Some were also afraid of being ostracized and being cornered by the vociferous right wing," Gomez said.

Nevertheless, Gomez harbors no idealistic illusions concerning the role that Cuban exiles can play in shaping U.S. policy toward Cuba. He noted: "We are not that important a factor but we are one factor. Our committee wants to make sure that we begin to neutralize what has been perceived as this monolithic view of fanatical right-wing exiles who don't want normalization and prefer that the United States take the harshest measures against Cuba."

Time can only tell what impact the exiles' renewed contact with Cuba will have, but another look back at Union City may provide us with some clues.

Father Reyes has been replaced by a new priest. The Rev. Eduardo Zayas, the only Cuban priest in the small New Jersey city, says he favors the dialogue and plans to work to bring a better understanding between Cubans "here" and "there." Several months ago, he went to Cuba and brought back a letter from Catholic bishops there welcoming a "reconciliation" with their brethren abroad. Father Zayas read it at Holy Family Church one Sunday and once again the threats began. He received letters, telephone calls and a visit from a burly man warning him that "those who are in favor of Castro are taking their lives in their own hands."

Yet the young priest is now heading a committee in Union City that is sponsoring trips for Cuban Catholics who want an insight into the changes taking place at home. There are similar groups in other parts of New Jersey and other countries as well. The Union City group and a similar group in the Dominican Republic are expected to sponsor trips to Cuba this summer. Recently, the group in Union City ran into some problems when one of its members went to *Ahora*, the local Spanish-language weekly newspaper associated with the local daily, *The Dispatch*, and charged that the group was "infiltrated by Communists." Luckily, observed Father Zayas, the incident was not accompanied by the usual torrent of threats from anonymous callers. He attributes this to the current preoccupation with the Cuban exodus, adding that, conversely, the arrival of tens of thousands of Cuban exiles to the United States has tended to undercut the dialogue by reviving Cuban exiles' hopes of returning to a nonsocialist Cuba.

One day several weeks ago, as Father Zayas sat in his study in the Holy Family parish house, a group of more than 500 Cuban exiles filled the church parking lot, following a street demonstration in support of the Cubans who had taken refuge in the Peruvian Embassy in Havana. The parish priest could hear shouts of "War! War!" and "We Want a Free Cuba" while he worked on plans for his group's trip to Cuba this summer. Despite the new developments in the Cuban situation, he is still hopeful about the future of the dialogue.

"Cuban exiles still want to maintain a connection to Cuba," he said. "Every day I talk to someone who is fearful that because of this whole exodus situation the Cuban Government will stop the trips to Cuba."

And he added somberly: "There are Cubans in Cuba who support the revolution and who are willing to give up everything if necessary to defend it. The Cuban revolution is a fact of life and we are just going to have to face up to that." Father Zayas should know. He has six brothers in Cuba who support the revolution and two who have just arrived here in the Cuban boatlift. Those in Cuba consider the two who left traitors. □

COMING UP. "Women and the Military" by Jean Bethke Elshtain. "El Salvador: The Road to Armageddon" by Carolyn Forché. "Medical Indigency: The Plague on Our Hospitals" by Geraldine Alpert and Marsha Hurst.

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AFTER THE EXODUS

Is the Cuban Revolution In Trouble?

PETER WINN

For those in this country who have always viewed the Cuban revolution with hostility, the embarrassing mass exodus to the United States only confirms their view of it as a "totalitarian dictatorship" enclosing a "captive people" who would take the first "freedom flight" available to this "land of liberty." For those who have viewed the Cuban revolution with greater sympathy, the stream of headlines, images and refugees coming out of Cuba is at best confusing and at worst disillusioning. What is happening in Cuba?

At this distance, it is difficult to tell, and particularly difficult from accounts in the U.S. and Cuban media, filtered as they are through the lenses of ideology and the wishful thinking of exiles. To believe the Cuban community in Miami is to believe that we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the Cuban revolution. To believe Havana's public statements is to believe that they are losing only the "antisocial scum" of their society. Between these extremes, the American press has portrayed a Cuba in crisis, but has failed to give a clear picture or informed assessment of the nature of that crisis or its likely outcomes. Missing from the story is an analysis of the economic forces that underlie events in Cuba and that have played a major role in the decision of so many Cubans to cross the Florida Straits.

The most striking thing about the new wave of Cuban exiles arriving in Key West is that so few of them are political refugees, despite efforts in Miami to paint them in those colors. Although some cite political or religious reasons for their migration, most stress personal economic goals as their motivation for the boat trip from Mariel. Caribbean and Latin American migrants in search of economic opportunities are nothing new in the United States. On the contrary, significant portions of the populations of Haiti and Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic have made the journey north—one-fifth of the Caribbean's inhabitants came to our shores since World War II alone.

A comparison between the Cubans and the Haitian boat people who are also landing on the Florida coast in increasing numbers is revealing. The Haitians are generally ill-educated, undernourished and unemployed. They left their homeland because their basic needs were not being met. The new wave of Cuban exiles, on the other hand, tend to be skilled, healthy and working. Their complaints about the island they have left center on monotonous diet, inadequate housing and limited supplies of clothing and consumer durables. Some also list unsatisfying work and social conformity among their reasons for emigrating. They have been attracted to Florida by expectations of life in this country that we may be hard-put to satisfy, expectations that they will enjoy the American dream just when it seems to be disappearing in double-digit inflation and deepening recession.

Even its critics credit the Cuban revolution with satisfying the basic needs of its people in such areas as nutrition, medical care and education. Where the Cuban revolution has been less successful is in satisfying the aspirations of many Cubans to enjoy a life style like that of the middle class in developed nations such as the United States. It is a life style that is promoted by the Voice of America on Havana's radios, projected on Cuban television screens by Miami's Spanish-language channels and visible in the possessions of the foreign tourists who have flocked to the country in growing numbers in recent years. Cuba, however, is a developing country that could provide such a life style only for a minority—at the cost of uneven income distribution and delayed economic development.

Most important of all is the image of America as the land of opportunity, attested to by Cubans who went into exile more than a decade ago. During 1979, more than 100,000 of these émigrés visited their relatives in Cuba under Havana's new policy of opening the country to the outside world. Many of these earlier exiles have done well in the United States and have returned to their former homes bearing visible evidence of their new wealth and success. Their message to those who stayed behind is clear: you too could be enjoying this life style if you left Cuba and came to the United States.

Not Communism but consumerism, therefore, is the underlying explanation of this new wave of Cuban exiles. Most are not fleeing dictatorship but austerity, and their goal is not the land of liberty but the lap of luxury that they expect to find on the other side of the Florida Straits. These are not ignoble motives but they are not idealistic ones either. They testify to the inability of Castro's revolution to satisfy the consumer aspirations of many Cubans. At the same time, these motives for migration reveal the exiles' lack of revolutionary consciousness and identification. The siren songs of returning relatives would not have been so compelling had they not fallen upon receptive ears. What the new wave of exiles have in common is a consciousness that two decades of revolution have not altered, a mentality that values material comforts above political goals and individual well-being above collective welfare.

Despite these shared concerns, the new wave of exiles differ among themselves. Some were never supporters of the revolution. Among those kissing the sand at Key West today are many who wished to leave Cuba a decade ago and have been biding their time since the freedom flights to Miami came to a halt. They are seizing the chance to leave with the alacrity of people who have waited long years for what they fear may be their only opportunity. Had Cubans been able

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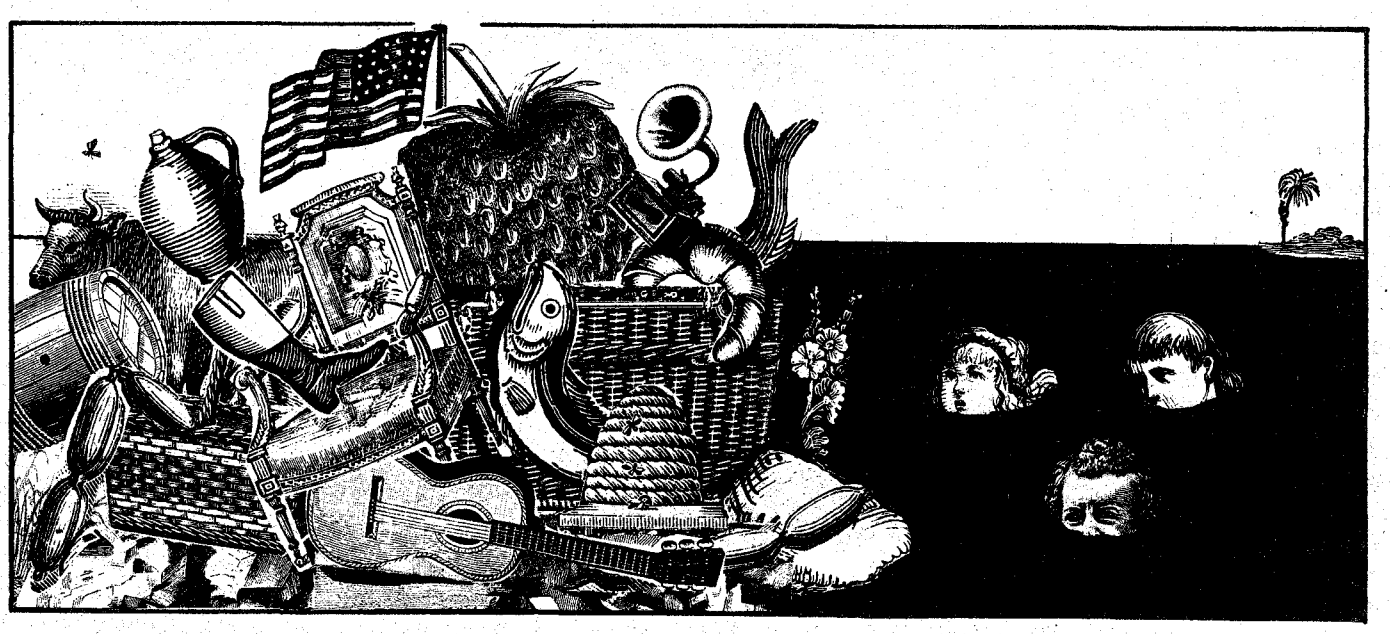
to migrate freely during the past decade, the current torrent of exiles might have been a smaller flow.

Others once supported the revolution in the belief that a few years of sacrifice would bring a lifetime of socialist prosperity, only to find that the promised land has receded before them like a mirage and that more lean years lie ahead. Some are deeply disillusioned with the revolution, while others have just had enough—of the austerity, of the promises, of the conformity, of the mobilization—and want more of the comforts and pleasures of life than they have enjoyed in Cuba. Still others are the children of the revolution, who have enjoyed a disproportionate share of its benefits without having had to struggle for them. As a consequence, they take for granted the Cuban revolution's accomplishments in meeting their basic needs and giving them skills and education, and focus instead upon the promises it has not been able to keep—or has not wished to make, particularly where material possessions and "bourgeois" life styles are concerned.

It is significant that the current wave of Cuban discontent breaking on the Florida coast comes after a decade in which Cuba's leaders have tried to respond to these consumer aspirations within the limits imposed by an underdeveloped economy dependent upon the export of sugar and tobacco and their commitment to an ambitious development plan. Since 1970, Cuban investment in housing, recreation, clothing and consumer durables has expanded at a rapid rate and the Cuban standard of living has improved significantly. Aware that the material aspirations of their people could not be deferred indefinitely without exacting a toll in productivity and consciousness, Cuba's leaders eased their 1960s experiment in utopian socialism and pursued pragmatic economic policies that combined moral with material incentives, centralized planning with decentralized administration and consumer spending with diversified development. Salary differentials were allowed to increase and goods and services made available to absorb this new discretionary income. Cubans were told that the hard times were past and that they could expect their material conditions to improve gradually but substantially in the future.

For most of the past decade they have kept this pledge. Rationing was reduced, nightclubs were reopened and housing construction was increased. Consumer durables were imported where they could not be produced within Cuba and more goods appeared in the stores. This gradual increase in prosperity was among the considerations that convinced the Cuban leadership that the time had come to open up their cloistered socialist revolution to the test of comparison with the capitalist world—a conclusion implicit in the decision to allow the entry of thousands of foreign tourists and returning exiles. The raised consumer expectations that resulted from this new policy were not entirely unanticipated, but Cuba's sudden inability to meet them was.

Ironically, just when the expectations of Cuban consumers were rising at a rapid rate, the revolution's plans to satisfy them were being undermined by an unprecedented combination of natural disasters. During the past two years, Cuba has seen plant blights decimate its sugar, tobacco and coffee crops, African swine fever destroy its hog herds and a Greek tanker foul its shellfish beds. This simultaneous destruction of Cuba's major foreign exchange earners and most important meat source has no parallel in Cuban history. It is a conjunction of plagues that would lead people less paranoid about the United States than the Cubans to wonder whether human hands had not played a role in these natural disasters—particularly as past U.S. Senate investigations have revealed that the last time African swine fever appeared in Cuba, the Central Intelligence Agency was responsible for its introduction. The current plague, moreover, comes at a time when both President Carter and Congress have been talking about "unleashing" the C.I.A., when Washington is anxious to undermine Cuba's image and influence within the Third World's Non-Aligned Movement (of which Fidel Castro is the very vocal head) and when the



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United States is eager to discredit the socialist road—because several Central American and Caribbean countries seem poised to take it.

The causes of Cuba's current crisis may be obscure, but its consequences are all too clear. The drop in foreign exchange earnings will increase Cuba's balance of payments problems as well as its economic dependence upon the Soviet Union, and will decrease its ability to import raw materials, machinery and consumer goods. The need to slaughter all of the island's swine will undermine plans to increase Cuban meat consumption. Instead of a period of progress and prosperity, Cuba faces more lean years in which it will be impossible for the Government to fulfill simultaneously its promises to consumers and plans for development. Cuban leaders will have to choose between the reimposition of an economic austerity that seemed a part of the revolution's past or a reduced rate of economic growth that retards its future.

Significantly, current signs indicate that President Fidel Castro and *compañeros* will choose to cushion the Cuban consumer from the impact of this economic crisis as much as possible, cutting back on their ambitious development plans instead. New factories may not get built, but badly needed housing will. Export agriculture faces a painful period of restoration, but the Cubans are optimistic that their current investments in crops for domestic consumption and a new policy of allowing peasants to sell surplus production on the open market will pay rapid dividends to the Cuban diet. It will be the first time since the early years of the revolution that its leaders stress distribution over development and social consumption over socialist control, but their willingness to do so is itself an index of the seriousness of the situation and their determination to resolve it.

At the same time, they are taking steps to combat the chronic problems of Cuba's socialist economy—inefficient management, overbearing bureaucracy and low labor productivity. Raul Castro has criticized publicly Cuban workers "who have interpreted freedom from exploitation as freedom from work," while asserting that "the main ones to blame for all these weaknesses . . . are not the workers but the managers and functionaries who . . . fiddle the statistics," cover up for friends and use their positions for personal gain. Thus, "they have no standing when it comes to being demanding of others." Although the economic reforms introduced during the past few years were supposed to cope with these problems, the switch from a highly centralized command economy to a decentralized market socialism has not been easy or uniformly successful. Cost accounting has been sabotaged by bureaucratic obstruction and labor productivity by overwork, underemployment and resistance to work norms. The new measures are intended to enhance the central Government's power to censure both, while working out the kinks in Cuba's new economic system. Together with an energy conservation campaign (not unique to Cuba!), these varied measures are expected to enable Cuba to overcome the current economic crisis and lay the foundation for future development. In his December "secret speech" to Cuba's National Assembly, however, Castro likened the Cuban economy to a boat "sailing in a sea of difficulties" and warned that "the shore is far away."

The dimensions of Cuba's current political crisis are less clear, as is the adequacy of the measures taken to deal with it. The number of Cubans rejecting the revolution for exile is sizable, but whether this new wave of émigrés represent a political embarrassment or a crisis of socialism depends upon how widespread and deep the alienation and discontent that they have revealed may be. Estimates of the number of those wishing to leave Cuba range from 50,000 to 500,000, with the most likely figure closer to 100,000. There may also be a large number of Cubans who do not wish to emigrate, but who share the concerns that have motivated those who do. If one accepts the highest estimate of would-be exiles and doubles it to take ample account of the discontented, as many as one million Cubans may be alienated from their revolution. This is a large number of people—the real figure may well be far fewer—but even this outer limit represents only 10 percent of the island's population of ten million.

Do the remaining nine million Cubans still have faith in Castro and their revolution? Do they still support his socialist road, despite the sacrifices that it may require? Does their consciousness reflect the new collectivist values of a socialist society? These are the crucial questions that have been absent from American press reports from Cuba, yet can only be answered on the island. It is impossible from this distance to know what is in the hearts and minds of most Cubans, although the accounts of foreign journalists indicate a general continuity of revolutionary commitment and identification symbolized by the million Cubans who marched past the 10,000 refugees in the Peruvian Embassy, and seen in the popular backlash against those who wish to go into exile—a seemingly spontaneous reaction against the rejection of both their revolution and their neighbors, a betrayal at once political and personal.

"Perhaps in a certain way we have been needing an enemy," Castro wondered aloud last December, reflecting upon the apparent decline in revolutionary ardor. "When we have a clearly defined enemy, engaged in hard-fought combat," he explained, "we are more united, energetic, stimulated." Today, thanks to the new wave of exiles and the revived hostility of the United States, the Cuban revolution has its enemy once again.

Although Castro has used this current sense of outrage and betrayal to rally Cubans around his revolution, aided by the nationalism evoked by the exiles' American destination, it is significant that he has not stopped there. Rather, he has seized on the crisis as an opportunity to criticize the political failings of the revolution's leaders and institutions.

If one conclusion Castro drew from recent events is that postponing consumer expectations in favor of developmental goals would cause popular disaffection, another is that the revolution's benefits must be equitably distributed if its collectivist goals are to be respected and the sacrifices it calls for borne with equanimity. During the recent years of in-

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creased consumer goods, some members of the state and party bureaucracy have used their positions to command a life style beyond the reach of most Cubans. Late last year, Raul Castro bitterly attacked Cuban officials for "using and abusing the prerogatives that go with their post and the resources of their enterprise to solve problems of their own and of their friends." The problem may not be as great as in some other socialist countries, but it was sufficient to cause popular unease. The recent demotion of guilty officials will now be followed by a sharp reduction in the perquisites of bureaucratic posts and a leveling of governmental and party salaries to conform to those earned by professionals with equivalent skills and responsibilities. If Cuba can reverse this drift toward the corruption of power and the creation of a privileged group of socialist bureaucrats, the current crisis may well prove a blessing in disguise for the Cuban revolution.

At the same time, the presence of so many young Cubans among the new exiles has revealed a lack of socialist consciousness and political commitment among members of the first generation raised by the revolution, whose consciousness and commitment had been taken for granted and counted upon to build the new society. This has been a bitter lesson and one that has led Cuba's leaders to criticize the work of the Young Communists and other youth organizations, which in some instances have become little more than revolutionary Boy Scouts or avenues of personal advancement. It has also called into question the assumption of Cuban universities that all their students are dedicated revolutionaries whose world view need not concern their mentors.

The result has been a campaign to raise the level of ideological concern within Cuba, to shake up complacent officials and institutions and rekindle the idealistic political commitment of the past. The march of more than one million Cubans in Havana on the anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion was both a symbol and accelerator of this new ideological intensity, while the campaign against bureaucracy and opportunism, and the political debates stimulated in Cuba's *barrios* and *bohios* by the desire of neighbors to abandon their country, may signal the start of a Cuban "cultural revolution" as well. One Cuban analyst who defines himself as "a man of the 1960s" recently returned from Havana overflowing with optimism. He described an atmosphere of ideological intensity and political fervor that he had not seen during the past decade of pragmatic policies and political institutionalization and saw in it a reaffirmation of the revolution and a renewed commitment to it on the part of the Cuban people.

It is too early to tell whether his optimism is justified, but it would be equally premature to consign the Cuban revolution to socialism's historical dustbin. The current situation is more than a mere embarrassment, but it is something less than a crisis of Cuban socialism. At a time of economic difficulty, the departure of a large number of alienated Cubans who will produce as little as possible, consume as much as they can and spread their discontent far and wide may be less traumatic internally than internationally.

Most important, the current crisis presents Cuba's leaders with the chance to correct their course and remedy the deficiencies it has revealed. In the past, the strength of Fidel Castro and *compañeros* has not rested in their ability to avoid errors—they have made more than their share—but rather in their capacity to learn from their mistakes and reshape the revolution in the light of these lessons of experience. That capacity is as relevant in 1980 as it was in 1970, when the disastrous campaign for a ten-million-ton sugar harvest presented them with a far more serious crisis of Cuban socialism than they face today. If they can confront the current crisis with the same critical and innovative spirit, then the loss of even several hundred thousand Cubans may be more than compensated by the gains of the strengthened revolution that the émigrés leave behind. □

TAP CITY USA

The Wiring of New Haven

ANDREW HOULDING

New Haven

A recent issue of *Telephone News*, a monthly pamphlet distributed by the New Haven-based Southern New England Telephone Company (SNETCO), bears the uncompromising headline: "Illegal Taps Are Rare." Rare? It was in New Haven that local police, assisted by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, carried out what was probably the most sweeping illegal wiretapping operation yet exposed in the United States. The police eavesdropped on thousands of conversations among hundreds of people over a period stretching from 1964 through May 1971.

A civil suit pending in a Federal District Court promises to provide valuable details about the long-secret operation. So far, there are 164 plaintiffs in the litigation, among them Black Panthers, antiwar activists, Yale University faculty, professional gamblers, housewives, journalists and lawyers. There are many more potential plaintiffs—the records of just one year's wiretapping activities include more than 250 victims (this was a list compiled by the police on index cards). Evidence from F.B.I. taps has also been obtained by the plaintiffs under the Freedom of Information Act, although the Bureau is attempting to have some of this information sealed on "national security" grounds. Newly appointed Federal District Judge Warren Egington will examine these documents in camera before ruling on their admissibility. He must also decide a long-pending motion that seeks class-action status for the plaintiffs. If this is granted, all wiretap victims who are ultimately identified could receive damages.

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It is too early to say that the rascals are on the run, however. They have been embarrassed by the disclosures, but they're not exactly cowering in the corner. A former New Haven police chief, who admitted in 1977 that he had authorized illegal wiretapping in 1971, was elected Mayor last fall and inaugurated in a special ceremony held at Yale University. During his campaign he asserted that he would wiretap again if necessary to "protect the city."

The former police chief's success demonstrates once again the unequal nature of the struggle against government spying and secrecy. It also makes it all the more vital that the wiretap litigation be carried forward to a successful conclusion.

The New Haven wiretapping story begins with a young and ambitious policeman named Stephen Ahern. In 1964, Ahern installed a wiretap machine in the spare bedroom of his apartment and, with the aid of a friend at SNETCO, started listening in on calls by bettors to illegal bookmakers. The machine provided a printout of the numbers dialed on the gamblers' telephones, enabling Ahern to add the names of the higher-ups to his intelligence files. His taps were electronically undetectable because they were connected F.B.I.-style at the "main frame"—the central switching points within the telephone company. In this way, the detectable voltage drop that occurs in most illegal intercepts was avoided.

Ahern's technology gave him an edge over his fellow cops as well as his targets, and he was promoted rapidly. By 1966, he was head of a newly formed elite squad, the Special Services unit. He moved his wiretap machine down to police headquarters and appointed a couple of his most trusted men to monitor it, still in secrecy. The men sat in a tiny closet with the door shut and earphones on their heads during the sweltering summer.

In 1967, riots broke out in the black ghettos, shattering New Haven's "Model City" image. Mayor Richard Lee, an avowed civil libertarian, appointed a new police chief in response to the riots—James F. Ahern, who was Stephen's younger brother. James quickly insinuated himself into the liberals' good graces with his talk of the need to reform the police department and send patrolmen back to college for degrees in psychology. Stephen Ahern, who by then had risen to chief inspector, acquired three new wiretap machines and expanded his elite squad so that the machines could be monitored around the clock.

Not long after, Congress passed a new, more restrictive Federal wiretapping law. Before 1968 and the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control Act, it was a violation of the Federal Communications Act to wiretap and, in Connecticut, a violation of state law. But these laws carried no criminal penalties. The 1968 legislation specifically authorized Federal agents to wiretap in criminal cases if they had warrants. They could also gather wiretap intelligence for "national security" reasons, and the states could enact their own legislation permitting state police wiretaps under court order. But municipal police departments were clearly banned from wiretapping under all circumstances. The law made it a felony to install unauthorized taps and added a civil remedy of money damages to victims of taps carried out in violation of the law.

The law raised the stakes for the New Haven wiretappers, but it didn't stop them. The men who monitored the machines later testified that they knew their work was both secret and illegal. Their chief, Jim Ahern, once entered the wiretap operations room and cracked, "If anyone comes in here, throw those fucking machines out the window!" But there were double doors, always locked, to keep out unwanted visitors. And they knew there was little likelihood of a Federal investigation of the activities. At least two F.B.I. agents visited the wiretap operations room on several occasions, and frequently called to check on what information the taps had yielded. Further, according to one of the police monitors, the Bureau supplied the special paper tapes that were used in the machines to record the numbers dialed by tap targets. And in 1970, the F.B.I. went so far as to rent an apartment in a residential neighborhood for use by the New Haven police as a remote wiretap base. (This operation ultimately produced some of the most valuable documentary evidence of the tapping—paper tapes showing the numbers dialed from the tapped telephones and handwritten notes on eavesdropped conversations.)

In early 1969, the Black Panthers opened a New Haven chapter, prompting the city police and the F.B.I. to step up their illegal surveillance. Both organizations tapped Panther telephones simultaneously, though they were curiously unable to prevent the torture and subsequent murder of Alex Rackley, a member of the Panthers suspected as a police spy. The Panthers—as was later learned from the gruesome record of the COINTEL program—had every reason to feel paranoid. The F.B.I. was truly out to get them; Rackley was murdered and the Panthers were rounded up. A bonus for the authorities was the visit of party chairman Bobby Seale to the apartment where Rackley was tortured shortly before his death. The prosecutor was able to parlay this coincidental visit into an indictment of Seale for conspiracy to commit murder.

All this led to the 1970 May Day demonstration in New Haven. Kingman Brewster expressed his widely reported skepticism about the Panthers getting a fair trial, Spiro Agnew fulminated against Brewster, and thousands of National Guardsmen were ordered to New Haven as hordes of young people converged on the Yale campus. James Ahern emerged from the May Day unrest as a model police chief who had used restraint against the demonstrators and cooled a dangerous situation. Ahern became a national figure, a superstar lawman, the epitome of the enlightened cop.

In hindsight, of course, his coolness during the demonstrations is more readily understood: his brother and their men were providing constant reports on the plans of the May Day organizers, which they discussed by telephone and which called for a nonviolent demonstration. Despite the latter intelligence, Ahern's policemen were busily harassing Panther supporters, slashing their car tires, pouring sugar in gasoline tanks, firing shotguns through windows and mak-

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ing obscene and threatening telephone calls.

Of course, this is not the way Jim Ahern subsequently told the story in his book, *Police in Trouble*. Instead of describing the May Day eavesdropping operation, Ahern referred in his book to a "constant flow of 'information' into our Intelligence Division. Sources ranged from reliable informants to phone calls from the public to generally circulating rumors."

In fact, the term "reliable informants" was a code word for the wiretap machinery: the most reliable information was available directly from those under surveillance. "Although gaining information through informants may seem a questionable tactic," Ahern wrote, and although it is "obviously subject to abuses, in many situations police must have information on organizations that may be a threat to life or to the law." Ahern also refers pejoratively to "such gimmicks as wiretapping," equating them with the excesses of the Nixon Administration.

Ahern, his transgressions still unrevealed, was appointed to the Presidential Commission on Campus Unrest, which investigated the shooting of students on the Kent State and Jackson State College campuses. He became a member of the Democratic Party's National Policy Council and, after he retired as police chief in December 1970, became director of a crime prevention institute. But Ahern's image of rectitude unraveled at the time of his retirement, when he negotiated a $14,000 disability pension from the city, claiming that a police motorcycle accident had disabled him, and then immediately assumed a full-time, highly paid job with the Insurance Crime Prevention Institute in Westport, Connecticut—a position he still holds.

After Ahern retired, Biagio DiLieto was made chief. The new chief was warned by friendly subordinates about the wiretapping and urged to dismantle it. The wiretapping was temporarily halted, but Stephen Ahern and his wiretap monitors wanted to implicate DiLieto in the illegal operation, perhaps for their own protection. They convinced DiLieto that they could provide him with reliable intelligence about planned demonstrations only if they were allowed to resume the wiretapping. He agreed, joined the wiretap conspiracy, then had second thoughts. In May 1971, he halted the wiretapping and ordered the machines destroyed.

Rumors of the wiretapping circulated through the city throughout the early 1970s, yet it wasn't until 1976, after the statute of limitations for any criminal prosecution of the police had expired, that I was able to obtain proof that the tapping had occurred. My stories, published in *The New Haven Journal-Courier* in January 1977, prompted an investigation by the city's Board of Police Commissioners. DiLieto publicly acknowledged his authorization of wiretapping but claimed ignorance of the law forbidding such taps. The Aherns refused to talk and tried to halt the investigation. The Justice Department chose not to enter the case because of the statute of limitations on prosecution. The civil lawsuit was filed in Federal court, and the Justice Department assigned lawyers to defend the four F.B.I. agents (three of them now retired) also named as defendants.

The case is moving slowly—no depositions have yet been taken—but the plaintiffs seem almost certain to prevail. A recent Federal court decision in the case of *Hedrick Smith* v. *Richard Nixon* eliminates one of the major defense arguments in the New Haven case—the claim that the plaintiffs should somehow have surmised that they were being wiretapped and therefore filed their lawsuit before 1977, when the statute of limitations ran out. The U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in the *Smith* case that the statute of limitations for bringing a civil suit for damages did not begin to run when the illegal wiretapping was fraudulently concealed from the plaintiff. In the New Haven case, the plaintiffs can point to a half-dozen instances of policemen who had, in 1974, falsely testified under oath that they had not been involved in wiretapping and were later revealed to have been major participants in the program.

Federal law provides that each proven wiretap victim shall receive $100 for each day that an illegal tap was in place or $1,000, whichever is larger. That is not very much to an individual. Moreover, since it is almost certain that the city, rather than the Ahern brothers, DiLieto or their subordinates, will actually pay the penalties, the penalties seem unlikely to deter police in New Haven or elsewhere in the future. One can hope, however, that the court will also apply punitive damages and reimburse the plaintiffs for their legal expenses. Such a judgment would demonstrate that it is in the *public's* interest to insist that elected and appointed officials do not engage in such activity and to insist on institutionalized safeguards against such operations on a local as well as national basis. (An ordinance modeled on one passed in Seattle that prohibits police surveillance of political activities is now under consideration in New Haven.)

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The New Haven case emphasizes the importance of such restrictions. It also underscores the need to resist attempts to weaken the Freedom of Information Act. If the F.B.I. is allowed to destroy files that are more than ten years old—as permitted by the proposed F.B.I. charter—it could destroy the records of hundreds of wiretaps in cities throughout the country. One reasonable amendment to the proposed charter would be to require the Bureau to provide written notification to all persons whose conversations were intercepted by F.B.I. wiretaps—not just currently but in the past. That would take the burden off the individual to take the often tortuous steps of obtaining his F.B.I. files. If the F.B.I. wants to get rid of old records, it should at least be willing to deliver them to the targets of its investigations. □

PHILOSOPHE ENGAGÉ

Sartre: A Life In History

MARCUS G. RASKIN

In the 1950s we believed that our dilemma and that of our parents' generation was captured best by the French existentialists, and it was best articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre, the man of engagement who did not stop, and whose life seemed to epitomize the anti-bourgeois intellectual and writer. Depending on one's point of view, Sartre was either "spread too thin" or a Renaissance man. He was all over the political and cultural map, lecturing, writing novels, plays and books of philosophy, editing a journal and even starting a movement. He did not seem to lose any time to unproductivity and alienation. While he could write about these states, talk and even organize around them, one felt—just by looking at his record of accomplishment—that none of this was really *his* problem.

In that sense he was like the child of another class, a ruling class who gave up other ways of looking and thinking about the world in order to identify with the rest of us. He understood that the writer's responsibility was not to escape the *Angst* of his time—not because one couldn't but because he or she was morally embargoed from doing so. Of course the real pain felt by Sartre and the others was caused by nuclear mushroom clouds, concentration camps, war, depression and the likelihood of new war and new twentieth-century disorders. It was in this turmoil we believed that French thought immersed us. All of the plagues I mentioned, and more, are still there, although we seem to have become inured to them and take them for granted. Man's eternal damnation is played out in resignation to what is, as if it has to be.

A generation ago there was no political movement to express feelings of anger, fear and frustration. We felt alone and, making the best of this loneliness, we romanticized being lost, perhaps taking our cue from *Nausea*, in which Sartre's character Roquentin saw his life as worth very little. If he could only write a song, something as fine as "Some of These Days." Being alone, uprooted, we felt the same way. We thought we could escape the meaninglessness and the resignation we felt so deeply if we could do one thing, write one song or book or have a thought that mattered, that had clarity and effect, that justified our existence—or perhaps our parents' tuition.

We were like the walking stickman on the cover of William Barrett's book *Irrational Man*, the sculpture of Giacometti that haunted us. And while we hoped for that one act that would give our lives meaning we prepared for the life of sleepwalking assent. As middle-class students (some of us barely in the middle class), we lived through fantasy lives of other people's struggles, sang Spanish Civil War songs and thought about the French Resistance. Of course it was not long before some of us found ourselves—along with a generation ten years younger than us—in a not dissimilar struggle.

In the American civil war of the 1960s, many did not know if they were citizens or guerrillas. But all felt engaged. In the 1950s our engagement with existentialism was a way of avoiding the fact that we were preparing for futures with the meritocratic corporate governmental bureaucracy, which would serve as the social graveyards of so many. We admired Sartre because he had escaped the excellent average of the bourgeois. He was not a crazy saint like Simone Weil nor was he "captured" as Camus was by Henry Luce in his cold war with the Communists.

Sartre lived his life looking for a third way, beyond socialism as it existed in various states, against capitalism and for democracy not only as a process but as an end, with an anarchist's belief in the individual person. No wonder this totally twentieth-century man felt he could only rebel at this century's political creations. As the gifted novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch put it:

> The deadening civilizations of capitalism and communism are alike rejected and the perfect society where complete stability combines with complete individual awareness, social security with civil liberty, seems less and less possible. So when one is caught between the intolerable and the impossible nothing is justified except a state of rebellion, however vain.

But how to rebel and where are enormously important questions. There was the way of Andrew Malraux, who seemed to be a cross between an intellectual and a gangster. In his youth he had stolen art treasures from another culture (Cambodia) for fame and wealth while proclaiming himself an anti-imperialist. He was a romantic who traveled to other people's struggles while keeping one bag packed for a quick return to established power. So it is not surprising that Malraux ended up an established minister and the mouth-

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piece of French culture, playing to Charles de Gaulle the role Andréy Zhdanov played for Stalin. Perhaps this is unkind. Malraux did bring expositions to the people, cleaned up the monuments and set propaganda on a more subtle course.

There was simply no way that Sartre could have been anyone's minister. He ministered to everyone. And like the son of the sailor that he was, he moved from one ideological port to another. In some cases he got the message later than others. Camus's nose for the stench of Soviet concentration camps was more sensitive than Sartre's, who thought that it was important to think in "political" terms, weighing the consequence of attacking the Soviet Union when it was reeling from the cold war and just recovering from the devastating war with Nazi Germany. Then the Hungarian uprising of 1956 caused Sartre to re-examine his own political assumptions. While he moved closer to the Marxists in philosophic terms, in political terms he moved further away from the Communist Party. Often intellectuals seek protection of their ideas by renouncing organizations that ostensibly stand for those ideas. How they handle this internal conflict defines their personal and political integrity.

But what does all this have to do with Sartre? Perhaps it is that each person who decides to become an actor in history seeks a role that fits his definition of integrity. Camus raced to his death, consumed by the problem of integrity and torn by the struggle in Algeria because of his *colon* birthright. Malraux found his life fashioned in honor and pomp. Chatting with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, gossiping with Jackie Kennedy, the intellectual's cultural object, talking the grand talk and sharing ponderous silences with de Gaulle. He sought honor and established power in France in the hope that others would legitimate him and affirm his integrity. But Sartre needed no such external props—neither the Lenin Prize nor the Nobel Prize. He was free enough, secure enough in himself to tell the commissar and the king that prizes were bourgeois affectations. For him, the work of the writer and philosopher could never be constrained or beholden to the official world.

Where did Sartre get the inner strength that enabled him not to fear being humiliated—that had him selling newspapers at the age of 70 in order to protect, and bear witness with, an obscure Maoist sect? He was more aware than anyone that the project of freedom demands an indifference toward one's place in history. To Sartre, the cost-benefit calculations so popular today in America were laughable and demeaning. To care about such matters is to lose integrity and freedom, which to Sartre meant the communal bonds in which each explores the other's possibilities. That is, freedom is linked to the group, the whole, but is a personal act of choice that the person exercises in any particular moment. Where freedom is not linked to the group, it is transformed into a subjective feeling of being alone and lost. Sartre understood the danger that in modern societies freedom can deteriorate into oceanic loneliness.

On another level, he understood the porous relationship between the objective and subjective. Through his books, plays, novels, articles, the magazine he edited and his politi-

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cal actions, he tied us to ourselves, to others and to the world. Even though some of his actions were halting, even failures, the left was not above gaining succor from him, whether it was the Russell Tribunal on Vietnam War crimes, or, in my case, his willingness to organize French support for the Boston Five in 1968.

His life taught us how we should be and live in the world. He embodied the profound paradox that to *escape* our existential loneliness we are called to responsibility to the world and to be responsible for what we neither control nor necessarily understand. He taught us that knowing objective responsibility may not help us understand the inside of a situation, that what appears to be a responsible action on the outside is, viewed subjectively, quite the opposite. This truth, in part an existential one, is also psychoanalytic in origin. A hard political truth of our time is that actions and acts double back on each other and assume an opposite meaning. This leads to irony and embitterment for many.

More than any other philosopher in this century, Sartre began from the *situation*—the crisis, the desperation of it. He saw it behind our own doors which we lock, hoping always to find how that door could be opened even though its locking was prefigured. This question, the power of humankind to control its own destiny, dominated Sartre's thought and action throughout his life. At first, in *Being and Nothingness*, it was the person alone who could make his own consciousness. In a way, and here I am oversimplifying his position to the point of caricature, his fundamental assumptions were not that far from the ideas of the American pragmatists, who located the ultimate good in the lives and consciousness of individuals rather than society. The consciousness and good actions of individuals added together could serve as a set of liberating actions for the group. By the time Sartre had written *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, he had come to believe that existentialism was a dependent knowledge system. If it was to have universal meaning, it would have to "be integrated" into Marxism. Subjectivism, he thought, had its limits. For Sartre, there was too much to understand in the world, and this could be done only from the outside, because each of us is on the outside of the Other.

But there was another reason. For all his anarchist leanings, Sartre sought holistic understanding. He believed there is a Truth that could be discovered. This truth emerges in history and action. And while the anarchists and the pragmatists seek many truths, throughout his life Sartre followed the Hegelian-Marxist search for a single, encompassing truth that would unveil itself through history. In his political struggles, which to outsiders looked quixotic, he sought to create a single history that would unveil a universal truth. It did not matter that he would sign everything and picket for anything. When he championed the convicts in prison, or those who lived as convicts in France's ghettos and the *favelas* of the world, when he championed homosexuals, or the Algerians and those philosophers who ran with and for them, he was pursuing truth and being faithful to the same concept of reason that the Enlightenment held. Reason and freedom are known through man's actions and so reason and freedom can be known by everyone, he believed, not merely the Platonic few who leave the cave to peer into the sunlight, but all of us. "I have always considered, and still consider, the truth to be whole," he said.

It makes sense that we continue to search for that truth in our work and lives, breaking out of compartments, linking situations to consequences, hoping that truth will not always stand in conflict with power. But if it does, let us hope that we will have the courage to choose the side that searches for truth, as Sartre did. □

LABOR UNREST IN THE P.O.

Postal Worker—Do Not Mutilate

CHARLES BAGLI

Behind the death last December 15 of a young postal worker at a Jersey City bulk-mail facility and the resulting protests that provoked a Congressional investigation, there lies one simple fact: the Postal Service has become industrialized. In the past, critics of the post office felt that because postal workers were Federal employees with a vocal lobby in Congress, they were given to featherbedding and inefficient service. As a result, in the ten years since it was reorganized, the Postal Service has been transformed into a businesslike operation modeled on the private sector rather than a public service. The results would be familiar to any coal miner or assembly-line worker—speedups and an appalling accident rate.

The statistical probability of postal workers being seriously injured on the job, in fact, is comparable with that for miners or construction workers. At the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center the accident rate is even worse. In mining and construction, one in fifteen workers suffers a serious injury resulting in the loss of one day or more. At the Bulk it is one in five. Last December Michael McDermott, a postal worker at the Bulk, became one of those statistics.

The fatal accident, which prompted the recent Congressional hearings, happened at the New York Bulk in Jersey City. Twenty-five-year-old McDermott was working alone on the loading docks while his partner was at lunch. He became entangled in the rollers of the conveyor system, which had been stripped of its safety bumpers. The closest emergency stop button was fifteen feet away. He was found dead at the end of the lunch break, sucked into the conveyor.

Soon afterward, the House Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization held hearings on the accident in Jersey City. Testimony by union officials and rank-and-file workers at the hearing highlighted the dangerous working

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conditions in the postal system. Morris Biller, president of the New York Metro Area Local of the American Postal Workers Union (A.P.W.U.) testified that "Numerous complaints, verbal, written and oft-repeated were made about the extendable conveyor belts similar to the killer machine. . . . Many complaints contained specific charges that conveyors lacked chain guards or limit switches, bumper switches, emergency switches or stop switches." Safety reports concerning the dock area where McDermott worked were filed February 14, 1979, nearly a year before his death. Clyde Dinkins, a former supervisor at the New York Bulk operation, was demoted last fall to a clerical position after he shut down operations that he considered unsafe—operations that were identical to those performed in the section where McDermott was later killed.

The overall accident rate for the facility in 1979 was 30.2 per 100 employees. The 4,100 workers at the Bulk have incurred 5,000 accidents in the last two years. The situation is by no means confined to this one plant. Nationwide accident statistics for bulk-mail facilities published by the Postal Service show an accident rate of twenty-eight per 100 employees during fiscal year 1978. Work-related injuries in the Postal Service account for almost half of the injuries to all Federal employees. It has become so bad that in his opening remarks at the hearing, subcommittee chairman William Clay was moved to say, "In my opinion the postal authorities place safety secondary to the movement of the mail."

In the course of the hearing, Kenneth Leiner, a spokesman for the Postal Workers Defense Committee, a militant group of younger workers, angrily charged the Bulk management with "criminal negligence." He pointed out that McDermott's death was only the tip of the iceberg for the entire Postal System. He demanded Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) coverage with full enforcement provisions and the right of workers to refuse unsafe jobs. The committee also demanded that the postal officials responsible for maintaining the unsafe conditions that caused the death of McDermott be removed from authority and criminal charges be brought against them.

Many postal workers trace these conditions back to the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which severed mail service from the Federal Government and established the Postal Service as an independent agency. The law provided for new, highly mechanized mail "factories" (the Bulk Mail System), prohibited strikes and instituted compulsory arbitration. The Postmaster General was made answerable only to the postal Board of Governors, and OSHA was denied jurisdiction over the Postal Service. Postmaster General William Bolger is currently fighting a Congressional bill that would place the Postal Service under OSHA protection.

Running the Postal Service like a business has finally paid off—on the balance sheet, at least. Last November, Bolger announced a surplus of $469 million, the post office's first in thirty-four years. He attributed the surplus to increased use of the mails, high mechanization and a reduction of the work force by 75,000 persons. Bolger declared that cost-cutting and productivity consciousness had become a way of life in the post office.

This single-minded pursuit of profit and efficiency has provoked widespread worker dissatisfaction, which erupted in a wildcat strike in 1974 in New Jersey and a national protest when the 1978 contract expired last July, in which 5,000 workers participated at four facilities. Much of the unrest among workers is concentrated in the Bulk Mail System, which consists of twenty-one highly mechanized mail "factories." Built in the early 1970s, they tend to be located near cities with high unemployment. Thus there is a higher-than-usual percentage of young persons, blacks, Latins and Vietnam veterans among employees.

The Postal Workers Defense Committee is a child of the new regime in the Postal Service and the most prominent of the dissident groups in the postal unions. With its main support in the New York metropolitan area, the committee's membership for the most part came of age during the Vietnam era. Many of them are veterans who do not share what they scorn as the "old Federal employee mentality," which gave up militancy in exchange for job security. They know they are working for a big, hard-driving industry rather than a public service. Leiner describes this group as "postal workers, union members, working in the union to improve the union and working on the job to improve conditions." He said that they are working for one industrial union representing all workers. At present there are four unions, and the committee feels—many postal workers agree—that the incumbent union leadership has not adequately protected postal workers' interests.

The defense committee had its origins in the first postal strike in history, in 1970, after the reorganization of the post office. Its precursor was a rank-and-file group called Out-

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law. The defense committee was formed during the 1978 contract battle, and is made up of many of the workers who were fired during contract protests. Since then the committee's militant voice is beginning to gain national attention. Its newspaper, *The P.O.W.* (post office workers), reaches every large local in the country, and sister committees have sprung up in Springfield, Massachusetts, and San Francisco.

The last contract lost ground and produced much bitterness. On July 21, 1978, a tentative agreement was announced between the Postal Service and the four national unions. This agreement placed a cap on the postal workers' cost-of-living allowance, provided for a total wage increase of only 10 percent over three years and no improvements in working conditions. More than 5,000 workers at four facilities stayed off the job to protest the inadequate agreement. In one of the largest mass dismissals in recent labor history, approximately 200 of them were fired for "participation in a work stoppage."

Workers nationwide voted down the tentative agreement. This was the first contract-rejection vote in postal history. Subsequently, the cap on the cost-of-living allowance was removed, but the Postal Service was granted the previously nonnegotiable right to lay off new employees. The contract was signed, but the 200 workers fired for protest activities were not reinstated. Many postal workers charge Emmet Andrews, A.P.W.U. president, and the leadership of the Mailhandlers Union Division of the Laborers International Union of North America with betrayal because they did not fight for the reinstatement of the fired workers. Andrews's role in contract negotiations and his inaction on the fired workers will probably lead to his ouster in this October's A.P.W.U. elections and the installation of a more militant and responsive slate of officers.

Meanwhile, the first concrete result of the hearings in Jersey City was the "retirement" of Alexander Gallione, general manager of the New York Bulk. Most observers consider Gallione to be a scapegoat. Under Federal law, Postmaster General Bolger is responsible for safety conditions in the Postal Service. Bolger, a former postal inspector, under the threat of a subpoena from the ongoing Congressional subcommittee, finally did appear at the hearings and made many promises of change. Congressman Frank Guarini of New Jersey has called for the resignation of the Postmaster General. He is backed by the Postal Workers Defense Committee and a growing number of union officials.

The 100 workers who attended the hearing in the Hudson County building in Jersey City were furious and anxious to prevent a whitewash of McDermott's death. Many agreed with McDermott's widow, Christine, when she asked "Is this what a life is worth at the Postal Service—a sack of mail?" A growing number of postal workers have answered that question for themselves and are working for change. □

LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 674)

merce that keep out unionized companies to the landlords that wouldn't rent A.C.T.W.U. a union hall in Greenville. The labor movement has no such unity. Southern textile organizing has for the past fifty years been characterized by what one organizer calls "hit-and-run organizing," further undermined by jurisdictional battles. A.C.T.W.U. seems to be perpetuating this legacy of failure.

As I pointed out in my article, the union's leadership is trying to prevent the union from being perceived as an enemy of Stevens. Instead they try to promote an image as "impartial third parties representing the rights of workers." There's only one problem with this posture. Reality. A.C.T.W.U. will never gain a lasting foothold in Southern mills by trying to feed workers fairy tales about labor-management cooperation.

Perhaps what Sessions wants is another stirring story about struggling exploited workers and intrepid organizers. But that is the simplistic stereotyped story, not mine. *Dedra Hauser*

RAUH'S FAULTY MEMORY

Englewood, N.J.

In Joseph Rauh's reply [Letters, *The Nation*, April 19] to John S. Rosenberg's piece, "The A.D.A.'s Long Shadow" [*The Nation*, Feb. 23], I was astonished to find him referring to "A.D.A.'s [Americans for Democratic Action] determined resistance to the Vietnam War at the very earliest stage." His memory is quite faulty on this. In the mid-1960s, as chairman of the Bergen County, New Jersey, chapter of A.D.A., I attended a number of national conventions and national board meetings. I found myself repelled by much of the foreign policy thinking, and particularly its support of the Vietnam War.

I remember especially a convention in Washington when John P. Roche was national chairman. The meeting was delayed two hours while Roche was closeted in the White House with L.B.J. (Later Roche went to the White House as a Johnson adviser.) Sentiment on the floor, led by the California, New York, New Jersey and Illinois delegations, largely opposed the war. But the chair and the "Washingtonians," led by Rauh, many of them close to the Administration and the hard-hat, hard-line unions, used brutal parliamentary tactics to cut short the debate and dubious counting on close votes to protect the offensive planks against revision.

I once pushed my way into a crowded room where Vietnam policy was being debated and saw the gaunt, towering figure of Norman Thomas, his face tight and furious, his long, thin prophet's forefinger outstretched and trembling. He said, "I tremble, not because I am old, but because I am mad clean through." His attempt to have the A.D.A. sharply criticize this atrocious war had been voted down.

In 1960, A.D.A. had hundreds of members in six chapters in New Jersey, politically effective leaders, some of whom sat in the Governor's cabinet. Today, the state organization is moribund. The support of the Vietnam War by top leadership in spite of the growing opposition of the rank and file soon led to the demise of the A.D.A. as a grass-roots group. *John R. Woods*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Politics of Gender

EDMUND WHITE

HERCULINE BARBIN: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century Hermaphrodite. *Introduction by Michel Foucault. Translated by Richard McDougall. Pantheon Books. 176 pp. $8.95. Paper $4.95.*

One of the complaints lesbians sometimes make about the patriarchy is that it doesn't take sex between women seriously, as though intimacies into which a phallus doesn't raise its head aren't real or important enough to be noticed. *Herculine Barbin* is a curious historical document that lends unexpected credence to this complaint. So long as Herculine was considered to be female, her ardent erotic attentions toward other women were accepted as the forgivable excesses of a girl. But once she was discovered to be a hermaphrodite and was reclassified officially as a man, his sexuality was taken seriously enough to be rejected.

This volume consists of four parts: an introduction by Michel Foucault, the author of *Madness and Civilization* and *The History of Sexuality*; a dossier of documents of the period that relate to the case (including medical reports about the hermaphrodite's body); the memoir (which is incomplete, since the recollections of the hermaphrodite's last years are missing); and the text of a late nineteenth-century story, *A Scandal at the Convent*, a licentious tale written by Oscar Panizza that is loosely based on the memoirs, though the author uses the hermaphrodite's revealed identity as a way of capping a story of lesbian titillation.

In his introduction, Foucault argues that the civil and legal status of hermaphrodites has changed over the centuries, a development that reflects more general attitudes toward gender. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Foucault asserts, hermaphrodites were free to choose in early adulthood which sex they wanted to join. "The only imperative was that they should not change it again but keep the sex they had been declared until the end of their lives, under pain of being labeled sodomites. Changes of option, not the anatomical mixture of the sexes, were what gave rise to most of the condemnations of hermaphrodites."

With the rise of administrative control in modern nations, however, the indeterminate individual was no longer free to choose his or her gender. "Henceforth, everybody was to have one and only one sex," as Foucault writes. "Everybody was to have his or her primary, profound, determined and determining sexual identity; as for the elements of the other sex that might appear, they could only be accidental, superficial, or even quite illusory."

In the modern world, gender is strictly assigned and the sexual conduct associated with each sex by convention has been raised to the level of an imperative of nature. As a result, sexual irregularities—the "passive" man, the "virile" woman, the lesbian or homosexual—are perceived as chimeras, errors, false identities that run contrary to natural law. And such chimeras are not mere eccentricities, mere white lies, but deep deceptions, because gender is now regarded as the deepest truth about the individual, the *fons et origo* of individuality. As Foucault observes, "It is at the junction of these two ideas—that we must not deceive ourselves concerning our sex, and that our sex harbors what is most true in ourselves—that psychoanalysis has rooted its cultural vigor."

From a socialist perspective one might find it significant that this insistence on nature, on human nature, appeared simultaneously with the triumph of the bourgeoisie. As so many thinkers, from Engels to Adorno, Gramsci to Barthes, have argued, capitalism attempts to obscure its rather recent historical origins and to justify its arbitrary social arrangements by appealing to nature ("You may think our system is cruel, but after all it simply reflects human nature; things have always been this way"). Since nature by definition must be unitary and unvarying, the bourgeoisie must universalize and eternalize its own behavior. Sexuality, as presumably the most basic, animal and irrational aspect of our psychology, becomes the very center of the bourgeois notion of the static natural self. As Foucault has pointed out, Victorian prudishness (and the Victorian urge to classify sexual "disorders") paradoxically served to deploy a consciousness of sexuality into every corner of experience. Whereas art, customs, the economy and language are all visibly evolving, the cornerstone of society—human nature, i.e., human sexuality—must appear to be immutable. Since so much emphasis is suddenly placed on sexuality (and, by extension, on gender), the system cannot sustain ambiguities. Herculine Barbin cannot be permitted to occupy a shadowy zone between the sexes; she or he must have a "true" sex, an essential gender that holds true despite misleading surface clues. Herculine must be a "pseudo-hermaphrodite."

The medical reports of the period leave us with no doubt that Herculine (or Alexina, to use the real name behind the pseudonym) was in fact a genuine hermaphrodite: a penis (or clitoris) two inches long when flaccid that was not perforated with an opening and that was partially sheathed in a fold of skin; a vagina two and a half inches deep into which male seminal ducts drained, no womb and no menstruation; a female urethra, and two testicles (one undescended). The secondary sexual characteristics were mostly masculine: flat chest; abundant pubic hair; a few beard hairs; and narrow hips. The voice, however, was that of a woman. One might hazard a guess that after puberty, Herculine gradually shifted toward a more masculine appearance since his body development was being shaped by testosterone secreted by the testes (no ovaries were discovered during the autopsy, though two vulvovaginal glands were detected).

In spite of this perfectly clear evidence of mixed gender, the two examining doctors insisted that Herculine's "true" sex was male. One of them wrote: "Is Alexina a woman? She has a vulva, labia majora, and a feminine urethra. . . . She has a vagina. True, it is very short, very narrow; but after all, what is it if not a vagina? . . .

Edmund White is the author of the novels Forgetting Elena *and* Nocturnes for the King of Naples. *His most recent book is* States of Desire: Travels in Gay America *(E. P. Dutton).*

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Yes, but Alexina has never menstruated. . . . Her tastes, her inclinations, draw her toward women. At night she has voluptuous sensations that are followed by a discharge of sperm; her linen is stained and starched with it. Finally, to sum up the matter, ovoid bodies and spermatic cords are found by touch in a divided scrotum. These are the real proofs of sex. We can now conclude and say: Alexina is a man, hermaphroditic, no doubt, but with an obvious predominance of masculine sexual characteristics." Inclinations, voluptuous sensations and testes—these make a man even out of a creature with a vagina. How fascinating that this definition leans much more on behavior than on anatomy.

The memoir itself tells a simple, moving story, presented in a style that ironically seems "feminine" for that period: appeals to the reader for mercy and understanding; a liberal use of exclamation marks; and heavy doses of sentiment that alternate with moralizing.

Alexina's youth was "passed in the delicious calm of religious houses." At age 7 she was admitted as a charity student into a convent school for rich girls: "Thus between them and myself there was a natural line of demarcation that the future alone was able to break." In this passage the "natural line" is that of wealth, not gender. She repeatedly tells us she was unusually intelligent though clumsy in handicrafts—prophetic signs she has planted to warn us of her latent if not yet manifest masculinity.

When she was 15, Alexina became a lady's maid, "although I did not possess *all the qualifications* for my position . . ." (italics mine). Throughout her narrative, Alexina does two things: (*1*) falls in love with the wealthy girls and women she is placed among and (*2*) professes the most orthodox religious and political views. When her sex is reclassified, she asks anxiously, "Didn't this abrupt change, which was going to reveal me in such an unexpected way, offend all the laws of conventional behavior?" The amorousness and conventionality balance each other neatly and blend together in the figure of the beloved, a girl who is always both obliging and virginal, receptive and angelic.

The crisis comes when Alexina confesses her unusual bodily conformation to a "wise" bishop, who in turn sends her to his doctor. Once the "error" was discovered, the doctor in a panic rectified Alexina's civil status and changed his gender in the public records. One day Alexina appears at church dressed as a man. The scandal is so great that he is no longer permitted to teach at a girls' school; he is torn away from the young woman whose bed he has shared so happily for many months. He's sent to Paris to seek his fortune, where he obtains a job as a railroad clerk. Alexina laments his fate as he looks back upon his first visit to the bishop: "I possessed happiness, true felicity, and with gaiety of heart I was going to sacrifice all that—for what? For an *idea* . . ." (italics mine). By the time he was 30 Alexina was so in despair that he committed suicide.

His despair was fueled by the very rejections he received from women in Paris. As a woman living a cloistered life with other women, Alexina was quite successful in making amorous conquests. She was bright, upright, strong-minded, sympathetic—a perfect companion. As a woman among women, her sexual relationships with them were free precisely because they occurred outside economics; since there was no question of marriage, there was no question of an economic transaction. But as a man, he was a poorly paid clerk with no prospects; a major part of the "idea" of being a man is the ability to provide a comfortable income to one's dependents. In *Down and Out in Paris and London*, George Orwell recalls how women who had flirted with him when he was prosperous literally didn't *see* him when he became poor.

Curiously, Alexina found one of the chief impediments to his happiness to be the years he'd lived as a woman: "I, who am called a man, have been granted the intimate, deep understanding of all the aptitudes, all the secrets, of a woman's character. I can read her heart like an open book. I could count every beat of it. In a word, I have the secret of her strength and the measure of her weakness, and so I would make a detestable husband for that reason. I also feel that all my joys would be poisoned in marriage and that I would cruelly abuse, perhaps, the immense advantage that would be mine, an advantage that would turn against me."

Remarkably, plumbing the secrets of a new-found world of men in Paris did not impress Alexina. Perhaps he found no secrets. But the secrets of women he is privy to—what are they? Could they be the hidden resentments, the feigned pleasures, the hypocrisies, fake compliments, simulated piques, pouts and ecstasies that wives, forced into economic submission, have had to resort to in order to achieve some of their own wishes and to defend a modicum of freedom? Alexina was always in love with women, but in becoming a man he entered into a new relationship with them. There is a George Eliot story called "The Trembling of the Veil" in which someone penetrates the membrane sealing off the future and comes back into the present, despairing. Alexina penetrated the barrier between the sexes and died with his awful knowledge of their shared humiliations, their mutual bondage. □

Reluctant Heroine

LUCY R. LIPPARD

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe. *By Laurie Lisle. Seaview Books. 384 pp. $14.95.*

Visual artists historically have had ambivalent relationships to words, especially those written about them and their work. Georgia O'Keeffe's inhospitality to would-be biographers is legendary. She says the things written about her seem "strange and far-removed from what I feel of myself. They make me seem like some strange unearthly sort of creature floating in the air—breathing in clouds for nourishment—when the truth is that I like beefsteak—and like it rare at that." In her 80s, however, she apparently realized that being the only major American artist with no monograph was not such a great idea after all. Characteristically, she made her own rather than handing the chore over to a critic. In 1976, Viking published an oversized tome with 108 glorious color reproductions and all the words by

Lucy R. Lippard is the author of From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art *(E. P. Dutton).*

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O'Keeffe herself. The opening ones were: "Where I was born and where I have lived is unimportant. It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest." When she was at the Art Students League in 1908, fellow student Eugene Speicher had told her, "It doesn't matter what you do. I'm going to be a great painter, and you will probably end up teaching painting in some girls' school"—the kind of story that makes all underdogs squirm with pleasure; there is no volume on Eugene Speicher, and Georgia O'Keeffe at 92 is one of the most famous artists in the world.

Laurie Lisle's biography of O'Keeffe —the first—was not authorized as such, but on their single encounter O'Keeffe told Lisle, "You are welcome to what you find." I wonder if she knew how assiduous an explorer she had let loose on her trail. Lisle has talked to innumerable people who knew the artist from childhood on, and has read every word written about her and every letter in the public domain. She has no art background, and was inspired to tread where angels dared not by the O'Keeffe retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 1970. Lisle wondered, "Who was the little-known creator of these powerful paintings?" I have trouble seeing O'Keeffe as little known, although it is true that the nadir of her reputation came in the 1960s, when little attention was being paid to what one reviewer called her paintings "of an old-fashioned stripe." The year 1970 was the perfect moment to re-emerge. The art world by then was restless and sick of contentless abstraction, and the feminist art movement was rising from its cradle with a rock in its hand. In the intervening decade, feminist artists have taken an unwilling O'Keeffe to their collective bosom as the major American art heroine, on the basis of both her independent life and her sensuously female imagery.

O'Keeffe's well-known reluctance to be associated with other women artists (or with men either, for that matter) makes the consistent feminism that turns up in this biography something of a surprise. Lisle makes it clear that her subject has little tolerance for women less strong than she and, like so many successful women, loves being the only one of the boys who is a girl. Yet O'Keeffe was a suffragist and longtime member of the National Women's Party; she omitted the phrase "love, honor and obey" from her ringless wedding ceremony to her photographer-mentor, Alfred Stieglitz; in 1930, in a debate with Communist journalist Mike Gold, published in the *New York World* as "Radical Writer and Woman Artist Clash on Propaganda and its Uses," she emerged (in today's terms) as a radical feminist rather than a socialist feminist, insisting on the recognition that women from all classes were oppressed. She acknowledged that she had been forced to look to male artists as models because social conditions had excluded women artists: "Before I put brush to canvas, I question 'Is this mine? Is it influenced by some idea which I have acquired from some man?' . . . I am trying with all my skill to do a painting that is all of women, as well as all of me." As recently as 1970, she told Grace Glueck, "I think it's pretty funny that women have always been treated like Negroes in this country and they don't even know it. Even when you tell them they won't listen."

From the beginning of O'Keeffe's career, women have been her most faithful audience, apparently agreeing with Stieglitz's much-quoted remark, "At last, a woman on paper." In 1916, O'Keeffe wrote of her first mature works: "The thing seems to express in a way what I wanted it to—but it also seems rather effeminate—it is essentially a woman's feeling—satisfies me in a way." Many viewers were shocked by what was seen as an unprecedented if abstracted sexuality. Some understood that hers was a voice they hadn't heard before. Lewis Mumford wrote, "She has invented a language, and has conveyed directly and chastely in paint experiences for which language conveys only obscenities." Henry McBride said, "I begin to think that in order to be quite fair to Miss O'Keeffe I must listen to what women say of her—and take notes."

These intelligent souls were not in the majority. "When I entered the art world," O'Keeffe has recalled, "the men weren't very happy about it. You weren't supposed to paint yellow pictures, and you weren't supposed to paint pink pictures." (Once, "just for fun," she decided to paint "one of those dismal colored pictures like the men . . . all low-toned and dreary. . . . The men seemed to approve of it. They seemed to think that maybe I was beginning to paint.") "Perhaps," she remarked bitterly, "someday, a new name will be coined for us so as to allow men to enjoy a property right to the word 'art.' " In the 1920s and 1930s, her growing fame was accompanied by the usual backhanded compliments: "O'Keeffe's song is direct and affirmative, free of introspective agonies, devoid of the feminine cringe and giggle," wrote Louis Kalonyme; Waldo Frank saw her as "the archetype of the eternal peasant," while theorist Willard Huntington Wright complained that "all these pictures say is 'I want to have a baby.' "

All of which sounds depressingly familiar and goes a long way toward explaining why O'Keeffe has been so resistant to the current feminist art movement. Once in a lifetime is probably enough. Nevertheless, her experience as a woman is inextricably entwined with her experience as an artist, and seems to be at the core of her ambivalence about the ways her art has been received, rejected and interpreted. She made a statement in 1923 that is the clearest I've seen on the artist's conflict between showing or selling and simply (self-indulgently?) making art:

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> I say that I do not want to have this exhibition because, among other reasons, there are so many exhibitions that it seems ridiculous for me to add to the mess, but I guess I'm lying. I probably want to see my things hang on a wall as other things hang so as to be able to place them in my mind in relation to other things I have seen done. And I presume, if I must be honest, that I am also interested in what anybody else has to say about them and also in what they don't say because that means something to me too.

Soon after she wrote this, however, she had been twice bitten and was not too shy to say so. The hoopla that surrounded her work fifty years ago recalls today's controversy over Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (which culminates with a vaginal image dedicated to O'Keeffe as the butterfly closest to flight—the woman artist closest to freedom). Although Henry McBride saw her shows as among "the first great triumphs for abstract art, since everybody got it," O'Keeffe didn't think they got it at all. She became increasingly cranky about what they thought they got. "When people read erotic symbols into my painting," she said, "they're really talking about their own affairs." This is true enough and it would be a very naïve artist who did not accept it. Yet because of the "femaleness" of her work, O'Keeffe's case was more complex.

The controversy centered on her flowers, which were perceived then, as they are today, as extraordinarily sensuous, if not explicitly sexual images. Her reason for painting them was innocent enough:

> A flower is relatively small, everyone has many associations with a flower—the idea of flowers. You put out your hand to touch the flower—lean forward to smell it—maybe touch it with your lips almost without thinking—or give it to someone to please them. Still—in a way—nobody sees a flower—really—it's so small—we haven't time—and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time. If I could paint the flower exactly as I see it no one would see what I see because I would paint it small like the flower is small.
>
> So I said to myself—I'll paint what I see—what the flower is to me but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it—I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers.

So she did, and then faced the backlash. "Well—I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower, you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower—and I don't." By 1954, caught with a bouquet in hand, she told Emily Genauer, "I hate flowers—I paint them because they're cheaper than models and they don't move."

Yet what people saw and still see in the flowers is there. I don't think it would be so universally perceived—by men and by women—if it weren't there. It's hard to believe that O'Keeffe is unable to communicate what she feels, and equally hard to believe that she has fallen prey to the insidious modernist syndrome that says, in effect: Heaven forbid that one be clear about what one is saying in paint or any other material.

I could be wrong about that. Lisle makes it rather clear that O'Keeffe is something of a snob. "You must cheapen art to appeal to any mass, and your mass artists will inevitably become bad artists," she told Mike Gold in 1930, before she herself appealed to the masses. Despite her pride in coming from farming people and the Midwestern heartland, Stieglitz said that "the greasy vulgar people, the thought of such people coming into contact [with her art] made her feel ill." Stieglitz may have been projecting; he sold her work only to those he felt worthy of such precious possessions, and many rich and middle-class *women* (in particular) were turned down because they couldn't express in acceptable philosophical terms why they wanted to own an O'Keeffe. (You might say that feminists are still trying to express in "proper" terms why *they* idolize O'Keeffe.) Such mystification finally seems unworthy of an artist who has so superbly and intensely managed to say, without words, something we all understand (even if we, in turn, use the wrong words to say so).

Lisle has taken a cue from O'Keeffe's own book (and life) and made landscape a major character in her biography. Unfortunately, what O'Keeffe's spare prose and voluptuously spare paintings achieve, gushy descriptions of nature's romance cannot. Places mean more than people to O'Keeffe, from the Wisconsin prairie to the wooded hills of the South to the bleak plains of Texas to the summer lushness of Lake George to the skies and skyscrapers of Manhattan and finally to the harsh, multicolored folds of New Mexican earth, where O'Keeffe has lived for more than half a century. "Living out here has just meant happiness," she has said. "Sometimes I think I'm half mad with love for this place."

She has often spoken about longing to "walk into nowhere," "to find the feeling of infinity on the horizon line or just over the next hill." She said of Texas: "It was like the ocean, but it was wide, wide land"; and of the Blue Ridge Mountains that they were "calling, as the distance has always been calling me." In relatively old age, O'Keeffe took up travel on a grand scale, preferring "the dirty parts of the world" (Mexico, Peru and especially the Orient).

There is, in fact, something Oriental about the way a small O'Keeffe painting of a wave broken beneath a night sky can give a better sense of ever-expanding darkness than the largest "modernist" canvas or the most grandiose earthwork. More than any other landscape painter I know, she works like a sculptor. Her longing for infinity is expressed in a unique sense of scale. She likes to see things very close up, or very far away. Even when she paints things in the middle distance, they look close up or very far away. And close up things become metaphors for very far away things, while very far away things are potentially close up things. The distinctions she makes are not those ordinary viewers make. "Nothing is less real than realism," she has said, sounding Chinese. "It is surprising to me to see how many people separate the objective from the abstract. . . . The abstraction is often the most definite form for the intangible thing in myself I can only clarify in paint." She prefers holes to solids. ("I was the sort of child that ate around the raisin on the cookie and ate around the hole in the doughnut.") Holes are ways to define the unconfinable—the sky, for instance, seen through the bleached white aperture of a pelvic bone, or its opposite: a lone black stone that seems to fill a void and be one at the same time.

At the risk of doing to the hills what was done to the flowers, I have to say that I always find O'Keeffe's landscapes as erotic or more so than her blossoms. The fleshy red and pink and yellow and black crevasses, the wrinkled white cliffs, deceptively smooth slopes are all

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the more sensual for being made of earth. ("A red hill doesn't touch everyone's heart as it touches mine and I suppose there is no reason why it should," she said once.) Intentionally or not, the paintings make a powerful case for the fusion of body and land that is associated with woman in every culture. (O'Keeffe mentioned proudly at one point that her pinkish rounded adobe house in Abiquiu was hand plastered in mud by women workers—"every inch was smoothed by a woman's hand.") Appropriately, the Pedernal—an oddly shaped mesa O'Keeffe has painted many times—is the birthplace, the Navahos believe, of their legendary Changing Woman. "It's my private mountain," O'Keeffe has declared. "It belongs to me. God told me if I painted it enough I could have it."

O'Keeffe rarely talks about this association of earth and body; she doesn't have to, since it is made so abundantly clear by what she paints. But when she does, she seems to be providing herself with the grounding for her desire for infinity: "My center does not come from my mind—it feels in me like a plot of warm moist well-tilled earth with the sun shining hot on it. . . . It seems I would rather feel starkly empty than let anything be planted that cannot be tended to the fullest possibility of its growth."

The prime virtue of Laurie Lisle's book is the way it draws together all these quotations and scattered bits of information, even if much of it is just fascinating trivia—like the fact that in her youth O'Keeffe often painted in the nude; that she once painted a pineapple for Dole and made bowls for Steuben; or that she may have designed the image on the Dutch Girl cleanser can. O'Keeffe, as we all know by now, is an extraordinary person and an extraordinary physical presence as well as an extraordinary artist. She has always been all three, according to Lisle, whose tone is often that of a star-struck acolyte even when she is dutifully reporting the less attractive aspects of her heroine's personality.

Luckily, Lisle's book is about the artist's life and not about her work, since she can be embarrassingly ignorant on the subject of art. Unluckily, Lisle does not write very well. She is given to journalistic clichés, the most annoying being the gratuitous insertion of banal physical descriptions of people sometimes verging on sexism and racism. (Dorothy True is "a curvaceous girl from Maine," Frank Martinez "a lean leather-skinned black-haired Abiquiu native whom she had doggedly taught to stretch smaller canvases.")

There is something missing—appropriately at the center of this biography—although the book is full of information and fills in some chinks in our knowledge that O'Keeffe herself will never fill in. It should be compulsory to read *Portrait of an Artist* in tandem with O'Keeffe's own book, so the artist's own voice and vision are also heard and seen. Finally, despite all the publicity, O'Keeffe herself is the hole in that center. She has succeeded in eluding the words she mistrusts. The best we can hope for next is a good, idea-oriented book that puts her art in the frame Lisle has provided. But the task will be rather like trying to capture the sky in a circle of bone. □

Epic for an Unlikely Century

EMILE CAPOUYA

DAILY LIVES IN NGHSI-ALTAI. *By Robert Nichols. New Directions. Book I, Arrival. 54 pp. Paper $1.45. Book II, Garh City. 89 pp. Paper $3.95. Book III, The Harditts in Sawna. 113 pp. Paper $3.95. Book IV, Exile. 108 pp. Paper $3.95.*

I suppose that this extraordinary work is a Utopian novel. It describes a possible never-never land, imagines social relations that have the human character of being at once arbitrary and touching (that is, they might have been entirely different, but they strike the reader as emblematic nevertheless), and confirms our values, since it calls them by the right surprising names. It contains enough dry discussion and rhapsodic invocation of chemistry, biology and technology to float or sink a half-dozen books of science fiction. On the other hand, it recounts convincing lives of human beings, dwellers not on Uranus or Pluto but in a rift valley in Central Asia. Its dreams and visions are of the earth, earthy. Like Hopkins, it exults in "all trades, their gear, tackle, and trim." On an early page of Book I, a farmer brings to a smith a damaged iron pin that serves to connect the plough handles with the share:

> "It's not worth fixing. We'll have to make you another. Just wait a bit."
>
> And with this the farmer sits down, his back to a corn row, his legs dangling over the embankment, and begins to chew grass. . . .
>
> "Here, uncle, find me the right mold." While another of the old men does this, Magor goes to prepare the jig, first kicking aside a chicken.
>
> The other makers continue to squat around their hookah pipes, listening to a transistor radio and exchanging insults with Magor. Meanwhile the blacksmith has wheeled out from under a shed the solar furnace. This consists of an iron frame about the size of a barbecue grille, lined with small mirrors, the facets focusing the sun's rays. At the center is a crucible. Squinting, the harelip adjusts the focus and drops in one of the manufacturer's steel bars. In a short time the color of the bar lightens, turning first a dull mauve, then pink, then a blue flame pencils from it. From the crucible, the molten steel is poured into the ceramic mold. The maker shatters this after a few seconds. Holding it with a pair of tongs, he bangs the kus on an anvil to knock off the scale, then plunges it into a pail of water as the steam rises in clouds.
>
> By this time the farmer has fallen asleep in his vegetable patch.
>
> "No use waking him," Magor remarks. "Might as well wait a bit, and finish it up proper." The smelting process has taken only about ten minutes.
>
> But now—as Blake, Alvarez, and Kerouac stand by watching—the work continues. The blacksmith devotes the next hour or so to elaborating his artifact, or as he says, "finishing it." This he does by reworking the back end of the kus (which sticks out beyond the shaft), reheating it in the flame, and hammering it. At the same time with the brazing torch he drops little copper beads on it until he has shaped it, very beautifully, into an ear of corn.

Those last lines go beyond craft to art—pure contraption, Auden called it—and retort a glory on that "iron

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frame about the size of a barbecue grille," the crucible, the length of bar stock, the ceramic mold. At bottom, *Daily Lives in Nghsi-Altai* is a religious work, re-endowing common objects and actions with a power that we no longer consciously attach to them. I feel, as I must, a certain diffidence in saying it, but the book appears to me to be a resurrection of epic in this unlikely century.

We have already made the acquaintance of three members of the Western expeditionary force, William Blake, Jack Kerouac and the average sensual postrevolutionary Cuban, Santiago Alvarez. William Morris will also appear in the flesh, as will Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsberg in the spirit. That's all right: two districts of Garh City, the metropolis of Nghsi-Altai, are named Flatbush and Red Hook. The novel does not hesitate to be confounding and confusing, provocative and provoking, to propose the transvaluation of all values like Nietzsche or to adopt the tone of that grand pain in the neck, the eternal boy-engineer. *Daily Lives in Nghsi-Altai* is modern and madly eclectic; eras in which everything is analyzed are necessarily eras in which everything is jumbled. And besides the eclecticism it has the half-conscious wistfulness of *The Whole Earth Catalog*. On the whole, though, the effect of all that is tonic, restorative—probably because Robert Nichols is a poet as much as he is those two things hateful to Thomas Love Peacock, a landscape architect and a "projector."

Nichols's first book of poetry, *Slow Newsreel of Man Riding Train*, was published by Ferlinghetti's City Lights Press in 1962. The long title-poem induces in the reader the hebetude of daily experience, to assail him at last with its poignancy. At the end of *A Sentimental Education*, Flaubert says of his protagonist, "*Alors il a connu la tristesse des paquebots*" (Then he grew acquainted with the sadness of steamships). The conclusion of *Slow Newsreel of Man Riding Train* is heartbreaking in the same way. Some of Nichols's delicate, moving lyrics have appeared in this journal during the last decade, and they are among those collected in *Address to the Smaller Animals* (Penny Each Press, 1976). And *Daily Lives in Nghsi-Altai* is probably best described as a long poem, one not so much with epic intentions as with epic effects.

In the rift valley of Nghsi-Altai a culture flourishes that is timeless in that, seen from our viewpoint, it is ahead of our time in certain respects, contemporary with us or behind us in others. Its technology is both more advanced and more primitive: solar forges for working metal and water buffalo as prime movers. Its values are archaic and far in advance of our own; when the inhabitants of the valley say "love," "peace," "the ecology," they do not mean "love me," "peace on my terms," "clean air, pure water and business as usual." The culture is timeless, too, in that it can be inspected by dead explorers who are alive in our thought, and represent the continuity of our own civilization. The account that they and Robert Nichols construct is haphazard and adequate. In the manner of things deeply experienced, we know as much about it at first sight, almost, as we could ever learn.

What we know is, of course, disconcerting and familiar, like the answer to the question of who'll deliver the milk after the revolution, who'll mine the coal? To ask the question at all means that, at least momentarily, we have forgotten the necessary shape of the world. So in Nghsi-Altai, though there is no government, people live in communities and their activities are closely coordinated. (I have allowed myself a moment of amnesia here. The "poem" says, "*Because* there is no apparent government. . . ." Or, to be human is to cooperate.) The formal decisions of social existence are taken in gatherings that resemble the New England town meeting without its sanction, the New England town ducking stool. A modified representative democracy that is not directly coercive: that would seem to be a rough translation into our own political terms of the manner in which coordination is articulated at a remove from the small community. Naturally, most actions are dictated by custom, as is the case everywhere. I think that Nichols lets us glimpse here the inescapable tyranny of the human condition, for what is as easy as custom, and what is as constraining?

Among the habits of the human race that are kept up in Nghsi-Altai is that of procreation. Nichols is so forthrightly, so wholesomely specific about the sexual conduct of his valley dwellers that I take it he is as much embarrassed by the whole business as the rest of us. His characters are by turns tender, tumescent or bawdy—and their language in the last case is not always well served, it would appear, by translation into our coarse idiom.

The speech of Nghsi-Altai appears to be Indic, with a great many loan words. The language seems to have been constructed from hints in the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Ramayana, together with economic surveys of agriculture and industry in modern India. Except for a few unhappy coinages, the linguistic high jinks are mostly very good fooling, clearly superior to Hemingway's pidgin Spanish, for example. And, to tell the truth, at many, many moments his essential gift of passionate utterance makes him and his readers see things unimagined before. But perhaps even more characteristic is the informal, improvisational manner—not without traces of carelessness—in which passages of great beauty make their point precisely by the effect of seemingly unstudied speech. At the very end of Book IV, some inhabitants of the rift valley, whose fortunes we have been following since the first book, leave the valley in boats conducted by shamans, together with the explorers from the West. The final lines of Book IV, anticlimactic by their position and their function, are a kind of triumph of the plain style:

> The shamans' poles were gone. However, the sweep was lashed to the stern where the shaman had left it. One of the passsengers took this up and began to move the river boat through the gorges.

Physically, these books are modest and handsome. Three of the cover designs are especially effective: Book I has a wind vane and some of its gearing, drawn as if for a patent application, against a background of dwellings on a dark, wooded hill, and beyond these, snow-covered peaks and cloud. Book III has a Bruegel: games, pranks and sports in the deep foreground, then castellated walls, and beyond them what appear to be armed men deploying across checkerboard fields and surging up to the walls (the designer of both, Gertrude Huston). Book IV shows a magnificent Chinese junk, probably an eighteenth-century steel or copper engraving (the designer, Sylvia Frezzolini). The jacket copy on all four volumes is remarkable for sobriety and point. All in all, a great credit to the publisher. These notable books—the whole of the poem—ought to be available in a single volume. □

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FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The Long Riders
Fame
Home Movie

The word for *The Long Riders* is handsome. Westerns can be depended upon to be that—they have the landscape to make them so—and Walter Hill has directed this one with an unflagging alertness to the beauty implicit in the stock materials. He understands horses as the Greeks did, massing them in friezes of contained power or streaking them like flags across the prairie. His saloons gleam in dark wood and glass and he has picked up from Sam Peckinpah the trick of killing in slow motion, extracting a cruel grace from slaughter.

The outlaws themselves, cavalrymen from Robert E. Lee's disbanded army, make an aristocratic show in their long traveling coats and black, broad-brimmed Confederate hats. They, or it may be their stand-ins, ride like centaurs; it astonishes me that Hollywood can still find such splendid horsemen, now that the whole rural West moves in pickup trucks.

The main cast is comprised of the largest assemblage of brothers ever hired for a single film: James and Stacy Keach as Jesse and Frank James; David, Keith and Robert Carradine as the Youngers; Dennis and Randy Quaid as the Millers, and Christopher and Nicholas Guest as the despicable Ford boys who sent Jesse James to his grave. This exuberance of fraternalism looks funny in the ads, but in fact it works well: the several clans play as brothers and look like brothers. The Carradines excel the Keaches in native charm, but the Keaches have the edge in foresight and implacability. James Keach endows Jesse James with the fanatic solemnity of a John Brown, as though robbing banks and waylaying mail trains were proper missions for a man of principle. The level of acting is above what a Western is usually expected to attain, and the script (in which the Keach brothers had a hand) is sharp and often witty.

Of course, one has no business admiring this romanticizing of killers; less so now, perhaps, than at any time in our past. But it is useless to protest: put a posse on a man's trail and, unless he has added obscenity to outrage, the public will cheer him on his way. There is even a mention of Robin Hood in this film, which is bizarre, since it appears that the only beneficiaries of the James-Younger share-the-wealth program were whores and saloonkeepers. *The Long Riders* does make the point that if the robbers had a code of chivalry, it failed to survive adversity. At the start, Jesse banishes a henchman who kills for insufficient cause, but when the gang's luck changes, its members begin to shoot hysterically and the James brothers abandon the badly wounded Youngers to the lawmen. Still, at the end, Frank James turns himself in to the Pinkertons on the understanding that he will be allowed to bury Jesse, a gesture that seems to have moved even those manhunters: according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Frank was never brought to trial and ended his days peacefully on a farm in Missouri. Jesse, of course, has survived as a legend because the authorities could not catch him and had to buy his corpse from colleagues willing to shoot him in the back. According to what one can gather from the fragmentary record, he was a mean little killer who deserved to hang: treachery gave him tragic stature.

So we're stuck with the romance of the Wild West, the Confederacy's gift to Hollywood. And few films have exploited it to greater advantage than has this one by Walter Hill and his band of brothers.

Alan Parker is the British director, mostly of commercials, whose previous feature films are *Midnight Express* and *Bugsy Malone*, an awful picture in which children impersonated American prohibition-era gangsters. Now, by contrast, he has had a splendid idea. *Fame* is a musical drama set in the High School of the Performing Arts, New York City's melting pot of talent. It is an extravaganza of show biz in embryo, which Parker—supported by Louis Falco's rampant choreography, Michael Gore's brassy music and the syncopated, often raw photography of Michael Seresin—delivers with tough-minded affection.

Fame, I would guess, offers about as accurate a picture of student life at Performing Arts as *Grease* gave of its land-grant college, but that is no great matter; musicals are about theater, not about life, and Parker isn't distributing a brochure on the celebrated West 46th Street institution. For all that, the movie may turn out to be good advertising for the school: the faculty is shown to be dedicated, hardfisted and effective, which last virtue is not surprising since the eight students whom one principally follows from freshman auditions to graduation are played by young actors, dancers and musicians who are already established in their fields.

Parker, then, had a great background for a raucous show and he would have been wise to stay with it. However, he wanted to do more, to explore the minds and lives of his fledgling performers. It was tempting, since Performing Arts, in fact as in the film, is a pressure tank of ambition, a forcing bed for boys and girls who dream of pulling themselves out of their sorry backgrounds by the bootstraps of their innate gifts. *Fame*'s players are black, Puerto Rican and white; they are alike only because, having no reasonable chance of growing into maturity, they propose to attain it in a leap.

The film suggests that all-or-nothing tension well enough in the school con-

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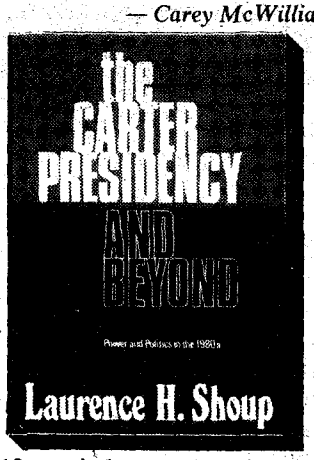

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text, but when it moves out into the city and tries to probe deeper it goes soft. Parker is too honest to vex his young people with trivial, transient problems; they are not burdened with adolescent acne but with incipient paranoia, schizophrenia, violence, hate, suicide and rape.

Yet within its exuberant, upbeat framework, the movie cannot cope with such matters; repeatedly, it uncovers some appalling information about one or another of the principals, only to dispose of it sentimentally, or to leave it unresolved. As a result, when *Fame* rises to its triumphant commencement finale of unleashed joy, one is left with the anxious feeling that it has not come to terms with the business of life, that the massed voices and vibrant bodies are belting out hope against unexamined odds. Generally speaking, that is what graduates of a professional school like Performing Arts habitually do, but I am speaking now of individual pitfalls rather than the general hazards of the trade. Show-biz films are notorious for their fatuous personal stories; in *Fame*, by contrast, these stories are too arresting for the attention that can be given them.

The young actors around whom Parker builds his show are Irene Cara, Lee Curreri, Laura Dean, Antonia Franceschi, Paul McCrane, Barry Miller, Gene Anthony Ray and Maureen Teefy. You may not recognize the names now, but I suspect that before long you will.

Another film with a school background is *Home Movie*, directed by Brian De Palma at Sarah Lawrence when he was teaching there a year or so ago. His students wrote the screenplay and participated in various aspects of the production, but the main parts are taken by professionals, who appeared, I can only suppose, out of friendship to De Palma.

The script aspires to parody, but lacks the yeast of wit. It operates on the assumption that deliberate incompetence is inherently funny, a misapprehension that sometimes seems endemic in the young, but which De Palma should have discouraged. Instead, he urges his cast to pile ham on inanity. Kirk Douglas plays a lunatic professor of film (student revenge on De Palma?) who talks in camera shorthand and preaches that everyone can star in his own life. Gerrit Graham teaches Spartanetics 101, a course that emphasizes male supremacy, a diet of roots and the sort of campfire activity that has earned the avocation of scoutmaster a bad name.

Sarah Lawrence, founded as a woman's college, has more recently admitted men, so that display of berserk male chauvinism may have a special piquancy on the Bronxville campus. So may Nancy Allen's portrayal of a Lewis Carroll heroine in thrall to a priapic rabbit in the form of a hand puppet, or Vincent Gardenia's inability to keep his hands off the buttocks of any female (and the occasional male) who comes within his reach. Other characters are perhaps similarly keyed; in fact, the whole film looks to be an extended "in" joke, and I can imagine the student body falling about in helpless laughter when it was screened for them. Home movies should be kept within the family. □

ARCHITECTURE

JANE HOLTZ KAY

Bless this house. What else has been cross-stitched so conspicuously across the consciousness of America? *Home is where the heart is.* How else to explain why the most mobile nation on earth has settled itself in the most permanent way: from sea to shining sea, from Levittown to neocubist retreat, three-quarters of our population own one.

Now, of course, the lone house on the lot is under assault. High energy costs to fuel us to, in and around it; changing patterns of life and inflation make us view the characteristic dwelling of the suburb with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we hurry to buy the last houseboat before the floods come. On the other, we wonder if that boat has not sprung a leak. By making us "house poor" and by failing to serve new needs, the shelter built to serve the auto-dependent nuclear family is not adapting to the groupings of life today.

The old, the young, the single, the work-directed—the 93 percent of us not living a "traditional" way of life, according to current statistics—have trouble making this prevailing mode of shelter work. An *Architectural Record* panel on housing and community needs was asked, "If stereotyped dwelling units are being built to fit stereotyped families, who is paying attention to the real housing needs of real people?" "Almost nobody," replied the panelists.

If the marketplace is unfit to deal with the misfit between traditional and real needs, at least some scholarly thought has been brought to bear on the origins and meaning of the problem. To single out the home in American history is to understand its durability as an image over the centuries; this as much as anything else is the service of David Handlin's *The American Home* (Little, Brown and Company) and Jan Cohn's *The Palace or the Poorhouse* (University of Michigan Press). In social, political and architectural histories, these authors trace the most conspicuous and subtle aspects of the house as home and symbol. Their studies carry us from eccentrics such as Orson Squire Folwer to mainline politicians such as Herbert Hoover who insisted that "No man ever fought for his boarding house" and that " 'Home Sweet Home,' 'My Old Kentucky Home' and the 'Little Gray House in the West' were not written about tenements and apartments."

Handlin and Cohn abandon the style of the usual architectural histories that tend to skip from facade to facade; they go beyond the house-beautiful magazines that dote on lavish furnishings within the architectural shell to document how we lived from 1607 to early twentieth-century America. *The American Home* and *The Palace or the Poorhouse* take us back to the days when shelter preoccupied architectural, social and political reformers. Not the least of the benefits of these books is to offer alternatives to the single-home style packaged so drearily in the last decades.

Handlin's book, illustrated and subtitled *Architecture and Society, 1815-1915*, tries to be definitive; it ranges from the technology of concrete to the economics of Savings and Loan Associations, from architects' design to cultural considerations of the period. Cohn's book is more literary, and alas, not illustrated. Subtitled *The American House as a Cultural Symbol*, it begins with the Pilgrims and analyzes our Howells, Hawthornes and lesser writers for insights on the American home. Equally readable, these historians often complement each other. They both draw fascinating portraits of the wide range of people who have tried to create what we still so desperately lack—a "science of domology."

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Especially, though, they use history to emphasize the importance of the house we inhabit. In the beginning, both authors tell us, there were the religious moralists and missionaries of the home. To the early American, a prosperous homestead was a sign of the homeowner's good relations with the Almighty. Writers like Horace Bushnell and William Barclay promoted the home as the source of "Christian Nurture" and piety. That notion of the house as shrine began to wear a more contemporary cut in Andrew Jackson Downing's mid-nineteenth-century work. To Downing, the "House With Feeling" was a house smothered with foliage and settled gracefully on the landscape, tucked "in the bosom of Nature . . . buried in trees or under vines and moss-like rocks that they may not outrage the landscape," a romantic notion not unfamiliar today.

Given the nineteenth-century belief in the home as the nursery of democracy, we soon understand why causists took on the subject with such missionary fervor. The most sensible of these, Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, held out for the house as a "means of higher moral growth," then got down to pragmatics in their classic *American Women's Home* (1869). As the nineteenth century advanced, reformers sought more and more to extend the benefits of the home and homeownership to the whole society. Their motives were certainly mixed. (Reformers didn't aim to give dwellings to the working class for charitable reasons alone; they saw better housing as a means of keeping the passions of the lower orders in check.)

Whatever the reformers' ambivalence, it is refreshing to a twentieth-century reader to see the built environment spoken of as something other than a commodity open to the highest bidder. For decades, architects and planners persisted in believing that the built environment could improve its inhabitants. Frank Lloyd Wright's abiding faith in democracy and individualism led him to design the Usonian house for Everyman. Little did he know that his narrow heirs would dismiss such concerns.

But what of the multifamily dwelling? Handlin and Cohn both relate how social critics began to favor the apartment despite its incursion into the American dream. Jane Addams, for one, refused to peg a decent life to the owning of a single dwelling:

> For a long time we have made a sort of fetish of the house, and have come to believe that a man has a sense of being at home only when it is within four walls standing alone upon one piece of ground.

The wide range of designs for multifamily housing described and listed in Handlin's book went far beyond today's slab and corridor syndrome, ranging from the palatial edifice with its courtyard, to the structure with clustered individual entries. Even the suburbs showed innovation in styles of two, three, four, five and six-family homes. The plenty of the past's housing options listed in *The American Home* will dismay any student of today's constricted forms.

Although it stops in 1915, *The American Home* provides us with enough insights to expand the nineteenth century's fixation on homeownership into the twentieth-century's rage. Voices, left and right, have consistently and misguidedly endorsed possession of a house as a basic social right: "It would be magnificent if America were to make homeownership a goal of national policy," Michael Harrington wrote in *The Other America* just when the Federal highway and mortgage systems were doing exactly that. By 1978, Martin Mayer's developer-oriented *The Builders* was reaffirming the "right to own, use and dispose of land [as] . . . one of the great bulwarks of an independent citizenry." This in the period when the right to cover that land with gas-consuming, energy-exhuming structures was becoming one of the great bulwarks of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Now, of course, the compulsion to homeownership strikes many Americans as a social menace. In just three years, by one count, half of our two million condominiums have reduced the rental stock by that amount. The pressure to convert rental units into owned objects is alarming, and renters everywhere, especially the poor, the transient and the elderly, fear eviction. Apartment shortages and "condo fever"—combined with housing costs and shortages—have radically altered the ways in which we assess the virtues of homeownership. By searching out the origins of those myths, *The American Home* and, to a lesser extent, *The Palace or the Poorhouse* help us see why. □

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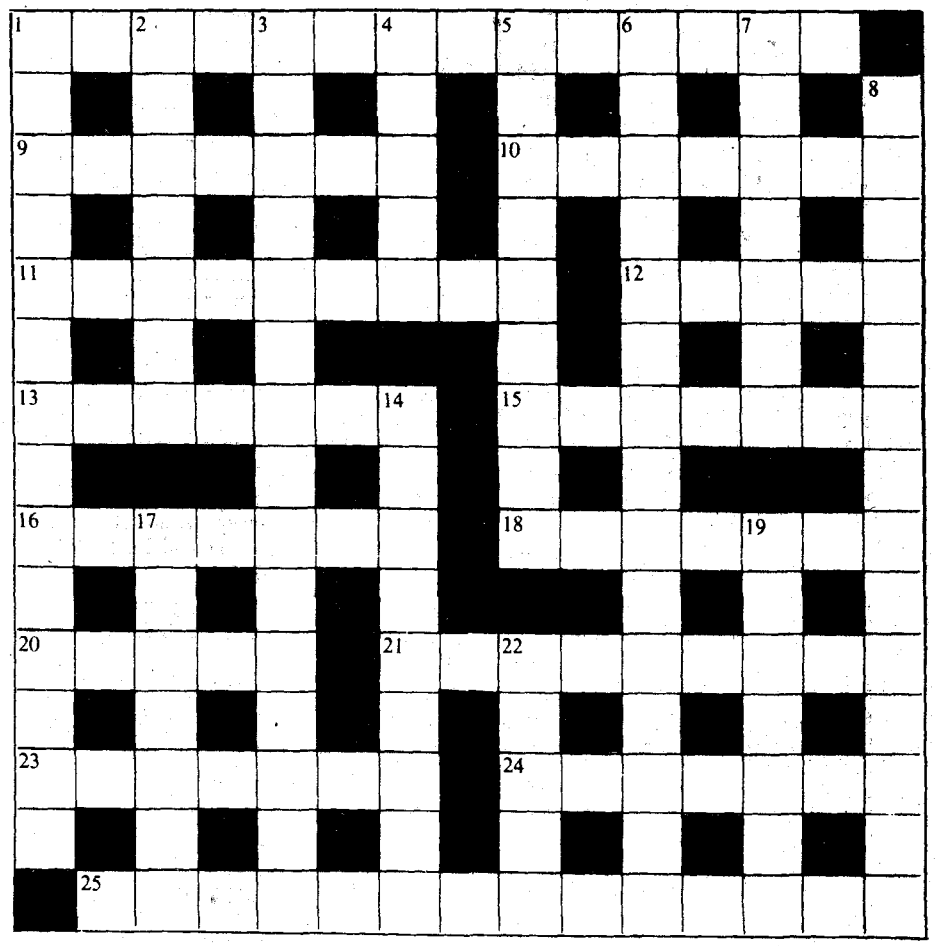

ACROSS

1 "Farm" in the case of Russia, and "Hoover" in the case of England, for example? (It might imply a lot of things!) (10,4)
9 Takes advantage of the proper season, with such as vegetables and pelts. (7)
10 Kibitz. (7)
11 What all the rest have, as they say? (6-3)
12 Butler. (5)
13 Used for dyeing in the south, and in the fireplace up north. (7)
15 No longer a Mediterranean island, separate from an organic body. (7)
16 The roast might be taken off around yours and mine. (7)
18 Chaplin decried it in *Modern Times*, but trains have to get it back to front. (5-2)
20 Cloacae have no starting point for such vessels. (5)
21 Inherits, or just enters. (5,4)
23 It's imperative to get back to the bulb. (7)
24 Like Miss Piggy at her worst? (7)
25 One who might be expecting hail, chiefly. (9-5)

DOWN

1 It doesn't necessarily warrant a ticket in D.C. (7,7)
2 What one makes sitting down on the side of the stage with a bird. (7)
3 They can officially determine the 25. (8,7)
4 The poet sat up thus. (5)
5 Not able to vote? That's just dumb! (9)
6 Part of the last course and what might go with the first course need some furniture for the ballet. (10,5)
7 An accompaniment of the 20's? (You might not like it if you wanted nostrum separately.) (7)
8 Whether profit might be implied by the sound of it or not, one might know if it boded fair. (7,7)
14 Seriously committed, I'd act badly indeed! (9)
17 Start the music—such theater! (4,3)
19 A slight depression in the point of the tooth, mostly. (7)
22 Matri-filial relationship in the trade. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1823

ACROSS: 1, 26 and 21 down Little pitchers have big ears; 9 Wildcat; 10 Spokane; 11 Rankle; 12 Smashing; 14 Sleeves; 15 Ramps; 17 Eases; 19 Reenter; 21 Eyebrows; 23 Bikini; 25 Riposte; 27 George Gershwin. DOWN: 1 Lower case; 2 Talents; 3 Local news; 4 Pets; 5 Taskmaster; 6 Hoods; 7 Realism; 8 Yegg; 13 Everywhere; 15 Retrieves; 16 Sitting in; 18 Steeple; 20 Rainbow; 22 Riser; 24 Shoe.

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